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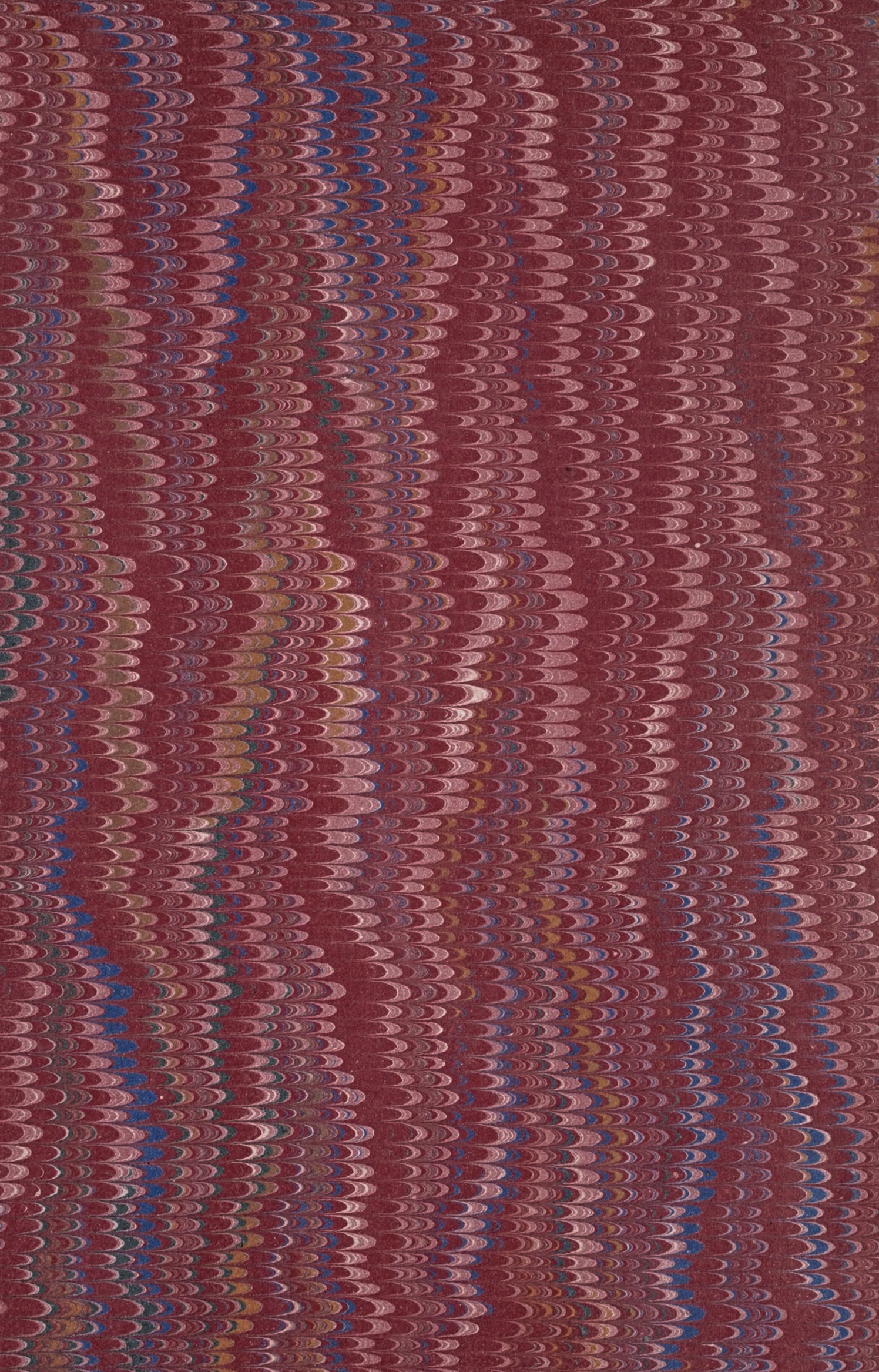
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THE ADVENTURES
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FRANK FRIENDLESS
AND
ELDER WEBBER;
OR, THE
PIRATE'S GHOST.

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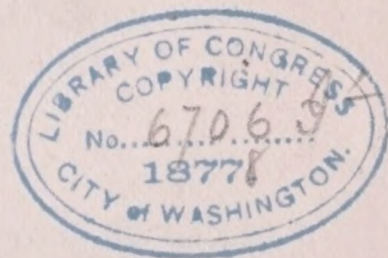
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35
By J. Haven



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THE ADVENTURES OF
FRANK FRIENDLESS AND ELDER WEBBER;
OR,
THE PIRATE'S GHOST.

CHAPTER I.

A FEW words concerning Frank's antecedents must suffice. His grandparents, in company with other emigrants, started from old England to find a new home in America. Two of the emigrants were millionaires, who, with their families, thought other considerations besides gold necessary to constitute a happy home. One of these rich men was Frank's grandfather.

It was in the days of the pirates, that is, when they flourished in spite of all the nations of the earth.

During their voyage they were captured by that notorious pirate, Captain Blackheart, and although a fiend incarnate, in this instance he allowed the ship to go on its course without shedding a drop of blood.

Some thought one thing, and some another, hence there were various opinions expressed among the crew and passengers. While some thought it was a previously arranged plan between the piratical captain and the captain of the ship, others believed that both captains belonged to the same secret Order; while again some thought it was because they had met with no resistance, hence their worst natures had not been stirred up; and each gave reasons for his opinion. In the first place, the captain of the ship had been sent on board of the pirate, and was detained several hours, and when he returned he seemed to think the affair a pleasant adventure, judging from his gratified look—as though escaping

with their lives was all they could ask, and more than was expected; while others thought they saw secret signs pass between him and the pirate. Be that as it may, the ship sped on her course without any further mishap, and in due time arrived at her destination.

But what a broken-hearted company were the passengers—friendless and penniless and in a strange land!

The result, in part, of the great loss sustained, was the discouraged state of mind into which these poor people fell. Death soon closed the sorrows of the grandmother of Frank, while the old gentleman lived long enough to see his only child, a daughter, married to a worthy clergyman named Friendless; he then went to join his companion in a country where rich and poor fare alike.

Rev. Mr. Friendless and his wife were blest with several children, one of whom was Frank, and the only survivor at the date of our story.

Frank's father and mother had passed away, after a life of usefulness, to meet several children who had gone before, leaving their youngest son to battle with the storms of life alone, and leaving to him a small, unencumbered estate, consisting of a small piece of land and buildings.

Frank knew the history of the piratical robbery, and longed to be like his grandfather, a millionaire. He keenly felt the loss of the money; and contrasting his condition with what it might have been but for old Blackheart, it made him feel like seeking his fortune, instead of waiting for his fortune to seek him.

We shall, in our story, let Frank speak for himself, till such time as we shall find it preferable to substitute biography for autobiography, and thereby produce a satisfactory conclusion.

Frank was not friendless, except in name. So, after making arrangements, and announcing his determination to his friends, he started forth to grapple with his destiny; and in the following honest style relates his adventures, leading all to see, whatever

he ultimately became, that at the commencement he was as honest as he was wise. He says:

“Friendless and alone, I started forth to seek my fortune. I stopped the first night at a country tavern, and in the evening, being restless and lonesome, I strolled to the fields and pastures surrounding the inn. It was only starlight; and as I paused for reflection by the roadside, I saw what appeared to me to be two diamonds, about the size of the human eye. I stooped to pick them up, and as I reached forth my hand they vanished from my sight. I was confounded; but the next moment I again saw them shining as brightly as before, about twelve feet off. I thought I could secure them at the next attempt, and again started to grasp the sparkling prize, though wondering at the change of position; but what was my mystification to have them again disappear, and reappear as suddenly as before!

“I began to query what could make diamonds shine so brilliantly in the dark? What could move them so suddenly, and cause them to reappear in the ‘twinkling of an eye?’ I began to fear I was too anxious to possess such property as gold and silver and precious stones, and that my desire was leading me to destruction, or that it was the fancy of a disordered brain, or that the Evil One himself perhaps was busy in the affair; though I must confess that I little cared whether it was a good or evil spirit, so that I obtained the diamonds—just as men usually feel when seeking their fortune.

“I again saw them, as brightly as ever, about twelve feet from the last place, and I determined to approach the glowing fortune as nearly as I could, and then, by giving a regular cat-like spring, seize the prize before it could again evade my grasp. I therefore cautiously moved along, and when within a suitable distance, made a spring worthy of a hungry and much-in-earnest panther; but it was all in vain; I only felt a spray of cold water in my face and on my hands. I began to think the ‘devil was to pay,’ or I was making a blunder that others could laugh at. Soon

I saw the sparkling diamonds the same distance off as before. I was now completely puzzled. I thought I would take another course, this time—that I would walk along to my coveted prize slowly. I did so, but as I took the last step, and thought to stoop slowly, I found my diamonds were gone, as before.

“I noticed, also, that I was going all the time in a direct line, and not in a zizzag course. I should have become alarmed at the strange adventure, had it not been for my great desire to possess wealth to such a degree that I was half crazed.

“I at once saw my two diamonds just ahead of me—I say mine, for I had felt sure of them at the first, and as I did not lose sight of them but for a moment, they were mine in prospect.

“I still determined to secure my coveted prize, and this time concluded to creep up slowly, and make a sort of circuit around and approach from the opposite direction. Still keeping the glorious prize in view, I slowly made my circuit; but I might just as well have thought of catching a shadow, or a falling meteor, for when my hand was on the identical spot, nothing was found but the bare ground; and not till I had looked behind me, or turned about, did I find my diamonds, which had again moved in the same direction they had taken at the first; and whether they had gone over my head or between my feet, I did not know; but if the ‘Old Scratcher’ had been giving an entertainment at sleight of hand for my amusement, using the diamonds to make the occasion more interesting and fascinating, I could not have been more curious; but from the fact that they were still in sight and apparent reach, I was as determined as ever to secure them.

“I concluded, this time, to change my movements, and so run them down. So I started full tilt; but lo! they were gone. Yet in a moment I saw them shining as temptingly as ever the usual distance off.

“I now concluded that, inasmuch as they kept on in the same direction, I would do the same, and see if I could not succeed in running them down in another attempt. So for them I started

again; but to my surprise they were still just ahead. So, after running a few rods and feeling out of breath, I sat down to 'puff and blow;' and what was my tantalized feelings when I perceived that my diamonds were really moving, this time, very slowly toward me; and I made ready to grab them, if they came near enough. But no, they stopped short of that. So, after resting awhile, with my eyes constantly on my prize, contemplating the strange adventure and wondering what would be the result of the affair—though still full of hope—I started again, only to be again thwarted.

"Just then I found myself opposed by what is known on farms as a 'stone wall,' several feet thick and as high. But to my surprise, on the other side there shone my diamonds, as bright and valuable-looking as ever, showing me that their taking a position on the other side had been no injury to them, leading to the reflection that, if I obtained them, as I hoped to, their power could take *me* as safely through all obstacles.

" 'Well,' thought I, 'I guess it is no harder for me to obtain my diamonds than for people generally to obtain theirs,' but concluded that the way I was getting mine was quite a funny way, as well as laborious, but, like others, I must struggle to gain riches, though it was mighty discouraging, as it doubtless was with them, and probably with about as many disappointments.

"However, I scaled the wall. And here a bright thought led me to another course of procedure. I concluded that, from my eminence—the top of the wall—I could take about as smart a spring, and go as far, as anything on earth could, even my diamonds; and I further thought that I would go as far beyond as possible; and as they were within a dozen feet of my perch, and I six feet tall, I concluded to venture my full length on my stomach, thinking that, if I did not get them by thus lowering my body if not my dignity, they would not be lost to me for want of doing every desperate and almost every despicable thing ever thought of—like many others who go for diamonds.

“ I now gave a spring that never was beaten by any two or four legged creature on earth—but I did not get the diamonds, though I thought I ought to. But I did get something else : I got very dirty ; for the locality was a yard where cows were kept over night. And it was a wonder that I did not see the predicament I was in ; but my eagerness made me blind to everything but my bright diamonds, and they were so bright that I could see nothing else. But if I had jumped into the Devil’s den, or a den of lions, there could not have been a greater rumpus than my advent made among the cows. I was really disgusted this time, and for a moment felt like creeping over the wall and lying down till morning ; but then there were the two big diamonds, sparkling as usual in the distance. Then how could I give up the prize, after all my trouble, while it was still in view ? I therefore pressed on, regardless of the bellowing of the cows and the barking and howling of several dogs.

“ If I looked as I felt, just at that moment when I started again on my chase, and had it been in the day-time and dogs had seen me, I think they would not only have barked and howled, but run off, too, from sheer fright ; and I guess if any of the milkmaids had seen me in that plight, that I would have had no chance of securing their favor. So I felt glad for a moment that, while I must pass for a dirty fool in my own estimation, none could see me to laugh at my appearance ; for really I must have looked much like a dilapidated ‘ tramp.’

“ Finally my resolution to possess the diamonds returned with such force, that I would have gone through fire or tophet to secure them. So, pressing on, in a few minutes I forgot my fatigue and appearance, and was as zealously pursuing the coveted prize as though I expected to exhaust their power to move. In fact, I had become so infatuated, I never thought to call into account how, or by what power they moved. But it now suddenly occurred to me that the Devil really had a hand in it, and I was inclined to doubt the evidence of my own eyes ; yet I could hardly believe it possible for me to be mistaken.

“I finally started again, full run for a rod or so, and then gave one of my best jumps. And, reader, where do you suppose I fetched up? Why, in a frog-pond of green, slimy water, reaching to my middle, with two feet or so of mud, and thousands of croaking frogs.

“I began to reflect, and concluded that, if all seeking riches had to go through what I had already encountered, I did not wonder so many gave up and remained poor, while so few succeeded; and I began to think I was, in degree, as big a fool as the diamonds were of value, and for a moment felt like remaining with the frogs, thinking that such a fate was quite good enough for so great a simpleton; and had there been any one present with a horse-whip to flog me thoroughly for my wild diamond chase, I should have felt that I deserved it fully; and though feeling, for the time being, that I might just as well lie down in all the slime and mud—being now exhausted as well as completely disgusted—yet I was kept from it by seeing my two diamonds still shining, temptingly near this time; for I had supposed, as I now stood where they were last seen by me, that they were as far beyond my reach—having sunk in the mud—as the stars over my head; and this thought was one of the several causes of my discouraged state of mind; for while I kept them in sight I still had hope, notwithstanding they continued to lead me such a bewildering chase. How they could have remained in sight on the surface of the water long enough to show themselves, was funny enough and very mysterious. And now there they were, high and dry; and if I was not perplexed, then there never was a puzzled and baffled wretch on earth, while at the same time I thought if there was on earth, or anywhere else, a worse-looking object than I was—judging by my cow-yard adventure and my present position in the mud and water—or a more disgusted, six-foot tall young man, then I would go through quite a struggle for the privilege of shaking hands with him; for ‘misery likes company,’ as I did for a moment among the frogs; and could I have turned into one, the

transformation would have been as suddenly accomplished as my spring into the water had been.

“However, I could not give up. So I started for my prize again, amid the tantalizing croaks of frogs and their splashing about as though they would be as glad to be rid of my presence as I was becoming anxious to be rid of them and their,—to them,—first-class home. And it now seemed to me as though my diamonds shone brighter than ever, and stopped a little longer, as though to encourage me on, or out of pity for my fatigue and various mishaps.

“But I now began to long for morning, though I knew not what a day might bring forth; but I knew that, if it brought forth cow-yards and filth, with howling dogs and slimy frog-ponds, I could avoid them, if my diamonds did have to go in a straight line.

“I now felt that, after going through what I had, to be disappointed would be quite as severe a misfortune as it would be to lose them after securing the prize, and I resolved to win if I had to follow them to the ‘end of the earth.’

“So I kept on for a season longer, but became exhausted, and took a seat on the ground to rest, and in the meantime to watch my diamonds. I rested perhaps half an hour, when my diamonds came a little nearer, and then they slowly receded; and fearing I might lose sight of them, I started again in pursuit, and so continued for a long distance, when all at once I could see them no more. But as I turned about, there they were in the same direction whence I had come. I approached them, but, as they had done before, they eluded me. And thus it continued for a season; they moved only a few yards in either direction, continuing to keep in a complete circle. I therefore concluded to sit down and wait till morning; and, fortunately, I did not have to wait long for daylight.

“When daylight appeared, what does the reader suppose I saw? Why, one of the ‘darndest’ big old frogs that ever lived.

He was as big as twenty common frogs, and weighed—I guess—ten pounds; and his hind legs must have been nearly two feet long, while his fore legs were half as long. I looked with amazement upon him. His great, round, bulging eyes now began to fade—and *they* were my two *diamonds*.*

“I now could account for the curious spray of cold water which so much astonished me when I received it in my face at the commencement of my wonderful exploits; as frogs, when hard pressed and frightened, always give a squirt of cold water from the rear. This I had learned when a boy while at play in the fields.

“But why should this old frog’s eyes shine so like diamonds? I queried, as I had never witnessed or heard of such a phenomenon in the eyes of other frogs, and my recent experience in the frog-pond seemed positive proof to the contrary. I knew they did not in the day-time, as my old frog’s eyes were now proving, for they continued to fade so that they soon looked like common frogs’ eyes. He was precisely the color of the ground, and even in the day-time I should not have seen him but for the fact that I had my eyes constantly on him. His color then accounted for my not seeing him, or only his diamond-like eyes, during my long chase.

“I felt very queerly upon making my discovery. My head began to ache, and my legs also, and finally my whole body. I also felt sick at the stomach, and feared I might have a serious time. I now began to feel anything but a friendly feeling for his old frogship, and most any one would have felt the same, and would have hated all the frogs in existence, in my situation. But what was the use of blaming the frog, after all? Only because I had placed myself on a level, or below this old frog, in running a race with him which showed that we were very unequally matched; for while he had borne it, I cannot say manfully, but like a king

* History mentions the bull-frog as being twenty-one inches in length, and his croaking, which resembled the bellowing of the bull, could be heard the distance of a mile.—*Tenney’s Zoology*, page 310.

among frogs, I had become very much demoralized in feeling and appearance.

“Yet I began to reflect, and really felt, that only this particular frog was at fault; and I wondered why he had kept on in a direct course, over all obstacles. I could now understand why my diamonds were not lost in the frog-pond. But why did he entice me on by coming nearer while I rested? and why did he not stop before, as he did then, and so prevent my long tramp? I queried.

“I began to think the Devil was in the old frog, and that he knew better; and finally I just concluded I would make him as much trouble as he had made me. So I went for the old long-legged, big-eyed monster of a frog. But in lieu of stamping him to death, I found him as nimble as though he had rested all night. He gave a mighty leap over my head, beating my leap in the coward by a great deal, so that I could no longer boast of beating all creation. He came down with a *thud!* on the ground, and disappeared forever from my sight.

CHAPTER II.

“Now, although the foregoing will be to some incredible, and this reflection might be quite enough to restrain me from continuing my wonderful story, yet I cannot refrain. I must tell the other side of the story, showing that, though made a big fool of at first by a big frog’s two big shining eyes, yet the sequel will well repay going through with all, and being laughed at besides.

“I supposed that when the big old fool of a frog—as I thought him—made his final hop, some twenty feet over my head, that it would be his last jump; and that as he came down head first—just as frogs always do when they dive from a log or from the

banks of their ponds—I was not surprised to see him go it in that style ; but, thought I, his head will get it now, and his big eyes be knocked out without my help ; and though I had intended doing it myself for him, I did not like to see him commit suicide, especially as it looked as though I had driven him to it, and that, in fact, he was not to blame.

“ These thoughts made me hurry to the spot where he had made his own grave ; for, strangely enough, the frog had made a hole in the ground large enough for a man to enter. But lo ! it had been a mere shell of earth, not more than two or three inches in thickness ; and I wondered I had not broken through. I now began to think, the Devil being in the frog, that that was what he was up to in keeping me in the circle, hoping that I might blunder in, as I had shown myself big fool enough for just such a fate, but as I did not, he did it himself. But I presume I had not stepped on the spot, or else my weight was not equal to the old frog’s heavy fall.

“ I stooped to look into the cavity, expecting to see his frogship a mass of ruins ; but he was not to be seen ; though, instead of him, my two diamonds lay about one foot below the surface, as brightly shining as ever. But as there was plenty of space in all directions, and the shell of earth so thin, I did not wonder at his disappearance, but did at his leaving his two eyes. But *they* were two *real* diamonds and no mistake, and no more like frogs’ eyes than my own were. So I concluded that these two diamonds were not his eyes, but that he had escaped, eyes and all. At this I felt well pleased, my mind changing toward him as suddenly and as greatly as it did when I saw I had been chasing a big frog all night.

“ Now what does the reader think of this ? It is all true, though I suppose he will think as I did at first, that is, that the Devil, or some other kind of an agency, was at work in the affair besides the big old frog ; but as good results followed, it could not have been the Devil, or else he is not so evil as represented.

Then how did all this come to pass? is the natural inquiry; and for a solution of the wonder we will look at further developments.

"I took the trouble to remove the crumbled earth, and to search for more diamonds—for it was natural to suppose that more were there—and fortunately I was gratified in finding more. I carefully removed all the loose earth from the opening, making it sufficiently large to work with my hands. I soon came to a stone jar holding four gallons. This I brought to the surface, and it was filled to the brim, including a large folded parchment manuscript encased in a silver book-like box. I did not stop to read it, but explored further, and brought up jar after jar, till I found I had thirteen, all told, and all were filled with gold and silver and diamonds of immense value.

"I saw that there was no way for me to carry my load, as I had about as much as a horse could haul. I was afraid to leave it, and what to do I hardly knew. At this juncture I looked across the field, and saw a man passing along with a horse and covered wagon. I then, for the first time, noticed that I was near a public highway. I at once filled my pockets with gold pieces, and started for the roadside. He saw me coming, and as he was about passing I beckoned him to stop, which he immediately did. I at once told him that I wanted to hire his team; but this offer he declined, saying he was on his way to the city to sell the entire establishment, as he needed the money to lift a mortgage on his farm.

"I then asked his price, and though an extortionate one, I counted out his money. He looked frightened, probably from my wild and haggard looks, though partly, perhaps, fearing me a robber, or that I might recant and he have to return the money. But he said he was in a hurry, and would return home.

"I entered the wagon and drove my horse back and forth, ostensibly to try him, but in reality to allow the man to get well off. I then stood up in the carriage to see if he was still in sight, and observed him looking back; and whether he thought I might,

after trying the horse, be dissatisfied, or whether he thought I was going for him for his money, I could not tell and did not care, when he took to his heels and ran out of sight.

“I immediately crossed the field to my treasure, and loaded up; and I found I had a respectable load for my horse. I then started in a different direction from that taken by the man of whom I had purchased my team. I soon came to a brook of clear water. I alighted, and improved my personal appearance by washing my face and hands, and removing as much of the dirt from my clothing as possible. I then rode on, and soon found I was ten miles from the tavern where I had put up the night before. To that I hurried, and was informed by my astonished landlord that he had begun to fear I was lost in my rambles. I told him that such was the case, and, feeling angry, I had bought a team. Fortunately for me, nothing could be seen by any one, as my covered carriage hid my ‘money pots’ from view.

“I soon had my breakfast, and then started for home, which was twenty miles off. But what the results of so great a change in my circumstances would be among my neighbors I could not tell or imagine, yet, as they knew my object in leaving home, they would at least think me rather luckier than young men in general, and would, being curious, gossip about my affairs.

“I arrived safely at the old parsonage, and at once disposed of my treasure. After attending to the wants of my horse and putting my carriage under cover, I attended to my own by changing my clothing and making myself comfortable for the night, and prepared to read the manuscript found on top of the diamonds.

“As I proceeded in acquainting myself with the contents of the parchment, I was filled with as much amazement as I had been at the first sight of the diamonds and the subsequent termination of my long chase; and as the story of my adventures proceeds the cause of my astonishment will be apparent to all.

“As I opened the parchment, such a croaking of frogs as I heard was enough to astonish any one under any circumstances,

but to me it was peculiarly interesting. I was led to think the king of frogs had been my guide to the hidden treasure, and that he had informed all the frogs in the world of the termination of the affair, and that they had joined him in serenading me, or in rejoicing at my good fortune.

“But I commenced, and before reading far I was as much astonished at the contents as at the first adventure, or at the serenade of the frogs; and I came to the conclusion that it was on another’s account that the frogs rejoiced. But here follows the contents of the manuscript :

““Young man, you need not hesitate one moment about taking the vast fortune now discovered by you. I, who had a right, have led you to it, and therefore you need not scruple to accept it; though there are conditions with which you must comply, in order to be happy and enjoy the fortune I never enjoyed.

““You wonder who the writer of this is. Well, I will inform you, that you may wonder more—though you will know me no better afterwards than now.

““I was a pirate. My name was Blackheart. I was in command of a piratical vessel when the ship on board of which were your grandfather, Aram Ahab, his wife and daughter, and one million in diamonds and gold, was on its way to America; and in capturing the ship I secured several millions, including your grandfather’s million. Nevertheless, I place all in your hands, as though all originally belonged to your ancestors.

““One million belonged to Israel Nathaniel. He has a descendant, a young lady, a granddaughter. You must restore the million originally belonging to her grandfather, besides relating to her all you have experienced in connection therewith; and also read to her this document. About what course you and the young lady may take in regard to each other, after her fortune has been restored, I have nothing to say. I have only to mention that her grandparents and your own were great friends.

““I do not know to whom the other millions originally be-

longed, therefore I can give no directions in reference to their restoration, but must content myself by making the only restitution I can. I therefore direct you to use the other four millions in doing good to mankind, using your own judgment; for after finding your own fortune, and restoring the young lady's, you will be prompted, I trust, by your goodness of heart, to do right. Should you not, I shall look after you in a style you will not enjoy.

“ ‘You wonder how I came to take possession of a frog, and how I came to guide you so strangely, like the star that led the shepherds along till it stood over the stable where the Virgin's baby lay; and as it would ever remain a mystery to you unless explained, I shall state it fully. (Of course this is written before I pass into that condition wherein I shall be capable of pursuing such a course; that is, of taking possession of the frog.) And how I came to write it was this:

“ ‘I found myself at last, though so rich and wicked, unable to drive away remorse. My conscience would show signs of life in spite of all efforts to benumb it. Finally I had a vision, which was as real to me as though my Maker had spoken to me face to face. It was as follows:

“ ‘I was reminded that I had the opportunity while on earth of making restitution, so far as I knew the names of those who were the rightful owners; but that, should I neglect the duty, it would require a long period of purifying punishment before I could acquire that moral condition which would enable me to take possession of a frog, and do through its instrumentality, and in such an exalted position, what I had failed to do on earth—to lead the heirs to their rightful treasure.

“ ‘In my vision I saw two of the heirs, yourself and the young lady, Miss Nathaniel, and I was informed that I must seek you out, and place you in my position so far as the possessions and their restoration and use were concerned. Hence I had full confidence that I should find you, either in life or after death. So,

with a determination to find you, I have been going up and down through the "New World," and shall continue so to do till I discover you, or till death closes my earthly efforts; though, should I be cut off without succeeding, I shall come out all right ultimately, for I have the promise of Him who cannot lie that thus it shall be.

"I shall expect you to attend to the work delegated to you. A neglect of your plain duty will, in the end, be quite as disastrous to you as to me. And should any one obtain wrongfully any of the wealth entrusted to you, they will be as severely dealt with as yourself should you neglect your duty.

"I was also informed that I should be relieved from remorse and darkness in proportion to the restitution made, either by myself or by you, and that when complete restitution should be accomplished, I would stand in the light and joy of the saved.

"I also saw that I should be enabled to rise above the frog, and to take a form through which I could work more effectually in looking after those interests that are to affect me in future life, should I be so unfortunate as to fail on earth, or through the frog.

"It is now plain why I have written, and why I have placed the manuscript in the jar—so that a failure to find you while I am on earth, for the purpose of making restitution to you and of delegating to you the great work herein written out in full, would not be followed by a failure after I am dead. Therefore, whether in the flesh I give you your instructions, or whether I lead you to your destiny through the frog, it will be all the same ultimately.

"You now see how a successful termination of my efforts on earth can affect me, and how your doing your duty after I am dead can be of advantage to me, and how you will stand affected if you do right or do wrong. Be wise, and beware!"

"Now, after what I had experienced, I could not doubt a word of the manuscript, and would naturally expect to see it prove as true and correct as my experience had thus far proved it to be. I never had the honor of a personal interview with Captain Black-

heart; but I must confess that it did really seem to me that he had been successful in finding me. I could not doubt his presence in the frog, for, if any creature on earth was ever possessed, the old frog was, while the visit of the frogs about my house led me to think that Captain Blackheart was around still. He did not claim to be good, but penitent.

“Now, as I have found my fortune, I conclude it will be very satisfactory to examine and count every dollar, to see if what I now possess in my own right and as trustee agrees with the manuscript—as all are naturally anxious to count their money, and if they find they have an abundance, they usually sit back to enjoy it. So I will bid the reader adieu, while I count my money.”

CHAPTER III.

THE last chapter closes the autobiography of Frank Friendless; but his biographer will continue the story, only changing its complexion somewhat. Though Frank might continue to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth, should he continue the story himself, yet, as people are not so likely to be exact in relating what they hardly care to have known, as they are in stating what they enjoy telling, we fear it might be so with Frank. We will therefore save him from the temptation by coming to his assistance. Besides, he finding himself very busy, we can be more particular; and as we have no selfish motives, we shall only write the facts, following as near as possible Frank's example.

Frank had never seen a great deal of money, nor many diamonds or precious jewels; and though he could count gold and silver as well as any one, yet this part of the fortune was only a small part; and had it not been for the fortunate circumstance that the old pirate had turned his vast wealth into diamonds to a large extent—probably for convenience in handling—the vast

treasure would have been so bulky that it would have been a bother to Frank from the moment he made its discovery. Fortunately, the diamonds and all the jewels were found in small bags of proper size, and all marked with their estimated value—thus making their aggregate worth a matter of easy calculation.

Frank pondered long over his possessions—both that of his own and the wealth entrusted to his care. He lived in a new world. How he longed to tell his departed parents of his good luck! And he began to reason that, if *some* of the interested departed knew of earthly things, why could not *all*; and if so, the entire spirit world knew all about the affairs of mortal life.

Men are often tempted to do what, when the opportunity offers, they had before looked upon with horror. So it was with Frank: *he wanted to keep all the wealth entrusted to him; and he finally thought he would try the experiment, at any rate.* And thus feeling, he retired for the night without saying his prayers or giving thanks; and, owing to the fatigue of the day, he soon went to sleep. How long he slept he could not tell, in his fright, for he was wakened very suddenly, and found, to his horror, a large frog for his companion, sitting on his bosom; and when he put forth his hand to the object, and felt the cold and slimy reptile, he was seized with an ague-chill, as though the monster had chilled him to the heart. His teeth chattered, and had he been shaken by a giant, he would have fared no worse in his grasp than he did while the ague was on him.

Frank's first thought was to curse the fortune and the old pirate, with all the frogs in existence. As soon as the chill passed off, he felt such a heat, that the clothing he had added to his bed he was glad to remove; and in his feverish thirst he sought the water-bucket. And what was his horror to find a confounded big frog in the pail of water, which, upon his approach, leaped out; and he felt but little like quenching his thirst with *that* water. He therefore went for a fresh supply, and, after slaking his thirst, he again retired, and soon found relief in a thorough sweat.

The frogs were gone in the morning, and he, feeling better, came to the conclusion that it was mere chance that they got into the house and out again. And it was a natural conclusion, after the presence of so great a number on the night before.

Though much better in the morning, Frank felt somewhat prostrated from his recent adventures and his severe chill. He was hardly able to stir, and found great difficulty in seeing to his wants. But after making a fire and getting his breakfast nearly ready, what was his surprise to find another frog in his very bread-dish, which leaped away, upon being disturbed.

Frank now came to the conclusion that he had better make a move toward the restoration of the million, as a commencement in doing right, for his froggy experience had not been enjoyable, while his reflections led him to think that he might have frogs often for company as bed-fellows, and about the house as common as vermin sometimes are, thereby reminding him of his wrongfulness in neglecting his duty—telling him as plainly of his wickedness as a human tongue could do—showing him that he was as much under condemnation as the old pirate was himself—reminding him that the restless old pirate would hold and exercise the power to harm him while he still continued unfaithful. These thoughts led him to resolve to move in the path of duty.

The next day, however, he again changed his mind, as no frogs were about to remind him of his previous resolve. The evil which had come upon him stirred up his guilty conscience, but when the evil departed because of his resolve to do right, he was fearless again. So he retired at night without having taken a step toward meeting his obligations; and consoling himself that he was not only rich, but smart enough to take care of his suddenly found wealth, he went to sleep, only to dream that he was having a dinner of frogs, and that the meat was tough, and even raw, and, finally, that his dinner of frogs was alive, and even strangling him; and in his attempt to swallow he awoke, to find the hind leg of a frog half way down his throat, scratching like a frightened

cat to free itself from destruction. Frank assisted readily in freeing himself and his frogship from the scrape into which he believed the very Devil had brought them; for the frog was as unwilling to go down Frank's throat as he was unwilling to have him go; and Frank as much disliked his scratching and kicking as the frog disliked the way he was dashed across the room and through the window and down upon the ground.

After spitting and gagging for a few moments, he went to the water-bucket to get some water to rinse his mouth, and, as he had thoughtfully covered his pail of water, to keep out dirty frogs, if there should happen to be any about, he supposed he would find the water all right; but as frogs know where to find water by instinct, and will always hop into it if it is within their reach, especially when they wish to escape any danger, it so happened that, as he raised the cover, a nasty frog, in his fright at being disturbed at such an unreasonable hour, leaped in; and in fury Frank dashed pail and all through the window.

He now started for the pump, and being barefooted, and finding himself stepping on frogs, he was glad to retreat; and as he had spit so much before he got dressed, he felt like cursing all the frogs on earth, and Him who created them, and especially the old pirate, who had recently employed a big old frog as a medium through which to introduce him to his lawful right—his fortune. He could not see why he should be cursed to such an extent for becoming rich, and he felt that he was worse off than he was the day he started forth to seek his fortune.

He had been good; but gold had as quickly transformed him into a wicked man as it had made him suddenly rich. He once more resolved to do his duty, his full faith returning that he at first had in the manuscript. He took a seat and wrote the following without further delay:

“Information wanted of the heirs of Israel Nathaniel. A fortune awaits them. Address F. F., at the office of this paper.

“N. B.—Clear proofs must be furnished, sufficiently conclusive to convince the most skeptical.”

The above he had inserted in a popular advertising paper. He was amazed to hear the croaking of frogs as he wrote. He began to think his case was like old Pharaoh's when God cursed Egypt with the plague of frogs.

Of course he suspected who would answer, and he knew who was entitled to a million of the money he had in his possession. And soon he received an answer from Miss Nathaniel.

He visited the young lady, whom he found an orphan and poor, though respectable; and he found her conversant with the piratical robbery of her grandfather; and inasmuch as he had no doubts, he at once informed her of all that is known to the reader, including his first adventure and discovery, the reading of the manuscript, his temptation and yielding thereto, and his entire experience among the frogs; and finally, as he was free to marry, he offered her his hand; and the young lady, also being free, accepted the offer; and as there were no reasons why they should defer it, they concluded to unite in marriage at once.

They repaired to a clergyman's house in the evening to have the marriage ceremony performed. At its conclusion, and just as Frank handed a most munificent fee to the minister—feeling his riches, and reflecting that his father had been a clergyman—a funny exhibition greeted the wedding-party—they were saluted by a most strange croaking of frogs. But whether it was because Frank paid so liberally, pleasing the old pirate by doing good with his money, or whether he was pleased on account of the marriage, and so got up the serenade, we are unable to determine.

The frogs seemed to be all about the premises and on every side—big bull-frogs, and frogs of all sizes and all sounds, from the grum rumbling like thunder, or the low mutterings of a bull, to the sharp sound of the smaller kinds, resembling the drawing of a cart over stones, and the squeaking or peeping kind, resembling the key of the fife.

How this wonderful demonstration of the frogs was brought about we do not pretend to know, and suppose it will remain

a mystery, not having the explanation that was given concerning the wonderful visitation of frogs in the days of the old hard-hearted King Pharaoh. We know how the first big frog came to appear in the fortunes of Frank, and whether the old pirate had influence enough with the Devil and all evil spirits, and whether they had so great a power over the frogs as to get up this concert, we cannot say. It was a great mystery.

Frank was not much surprised, after what he had personally experienced; but as his bride had had no experience among frogs, she was more astonished than edified; while the minister and his folks thought "the devil was to pay."

Frank took his wife and her effects to his house, where he made over to her for safe keeping all the gold and diamonds, saying to her that, as they were one, they mutually would hold the great wealth of the unknown heirs, and if they could not find any of them, as they had no clue, they then would do their duty to the best of their ability, while the gratification of spending the money would repay them well. Ah! they did not know what was to come.

CHAPTER IV.

It was natural and reasonable that Frank and his wife in the first place should seek their own comfort, interest and happiness; and this course they took, thinking that in due time they would do their duty to others. The old pirate could hardly expect them to do differently, and if he would only let them alone, they would square accounts with the world in which they lived, if possible, and with the *one below* too, they thought.

As to the world above, Frank began to think it was not interesting, or, that he felt not much interest in it, after all; while old Blackheart, it appears, had interested Heaven sufficiently to obtain a power to act for his own advantage—though undoubtedly

against the will of Old Satan, and such lost spirits as might wander in darkness for ages before gaining the hope that the old pirate had found on account of his remorse and repentance.

Now, Frank's name (Friendless) did not correspond with the facts surrounding him; for, so far, he had not an enemy on earth, though many good and powerful friends.

He now, with the consent of his wife, bought the largest and most valuable tract of land within the reach of his present humble home, and at once commenced to erect a building that was suitable for a king; for he felt that inasmuch as the two fortunes were united, and at present several more millions under their control, he would like to found a "Home," and take a position that would for all time be considered the starting-point of a great people.

Now, Heaven, Earth and Hell looked on in silence, so far as Frank was concerned, but all the world, so far as he was known, commenced to wonder; and though his townsmen were employed by him, and were paid a fair remuneration, yet they were only the more perplexed at his great and sudden wealth; and as they knew gold did not rain down from Heaven, they had curious thoughts and conversations in reference to his finances.

The thought, too, that riches were so changing their old minister's son, filled them with anxiety and alarm. Finally, after the great and grand house was completed, there came a change.

During all the process of buying and building Frank had seen no indications of the displeasure of old Blackheart, and there was really danger of his forgetting him entirely. But the old pirate had not forgotten him—he had only remained quiet till Frank had accomplished what was reasonable and proper, so that the way would be clear for the discharge of his duty undisturbed—that is, to dispose of the wealth in his hands as he had been directed.

But very few persons could be found suitable to occupy the place where Frank and his wife now stood. The temptation to

carry out their own views and interests, regardless of the old pirate's power, would be too great for them to resist.

Well, as it is said that money changes men, it had this power on Frank. It rooted out all his pious instructions, and made him a believer in chance and fate. His humility departed. He was now the richest man in all the country round about. He began to feel and show his importance, and he soon so greatly changed, that all his old friends changed to.

Now, they were, in reality, of more value than all his gold; but he was blind, and knew it not. He was aware of the change in the feelings of friends, as much as he was of the real change in his worldly circumstances; for they showed, in their deportment toward him, what their sentiments were.

But he was quite indifferent to all these things. If he had any feeling on the subject, it was that he rather liked it; for he, being so far above his former position and friends, thought it all right that this feeling should exist, and, as he was to be the representative head of a great family, he was quite anxious that all should not only see the difference, but feel it too. He believed that by the happy chance which had already commenced he would ultimately stand on the very pinnacle of honor and fame.

Frank now determined to surprise all around with an entertainment worthy of a king. He had furnished his mansion from the city, costing him in the aggregate hundreds of thousands. He could afford it—two millions of his own, and four millions in trust, which he began to consider his also. And, by the way, Frank and his wife were one in all things.

It would be interesting to describe the great establishment in all its parts and appurtenances, but it will be more interesting to note events and their results. So we pause only to say, that all that art and skill could do to make Frank's house what eye had seldom seen, was considered necessary to make a house suitable as a residence for the richest man in the country.

After Frank had all completed, he prepared to carry into exe-

cution his determination, and so surprise his friends; for though they had seen much and heard more, yet he wished them to see that it was no idle boast that he was so much above his fellow-men.

He therefore invited all to a grand party—men, women and children—including many of the grandees of the city, who had heard of his fabulous wealth and princely establishment. He also secured the most celebrated band of music to entertain his guests, and also the best cooks, besides purchasing in the city all such things as would add in making up an entertainment fit for lords, dukes and kings. Such a grand reception was never witnessed in all the country. Frank's wife was so richly dressed and so magnificently decked off with diamonds, that all wonder at once ceased in reference to the source from which Frank had derived his wealth—as it was not till after his marriage that it was known he had a “mint of money.” Of course this was very gratifying to both Frank and his wife, as no suspicions of the real truth would arise.

Time passed pleasantly. The different rooms were all filled, and a high gay time they were having, when, all at once, a big bull-frog jumped among the happy dancers, with a most horrid hoarse croaking; so that while the ladies ran and screamed, the men roared with laughter, until they began to think some envious person had introduced his frogship for mischief, which conclusion changed their mood, causing them to feel like pounding whoever he might be. For a season all was confusion.

At last order was restored, and all began to discuss frogs in particular, and “in every style.” And, now, as the guests had taken lively exercise, and the time had come for the grand repast, they all felt they could do it ample justice; therefore, as soon as all were seated, and all indications pointed to a feast of the first class, many expressed themselves in a lively manner, saying that it was a happy occasion, both to host and guests.

But all at once there came such a swarm of frogs upon the

table—into everything—on all sides—all through the house simultaneously, that the women shrieked, the boys flew to arms—thinking it a part of the programme—and the men thought and said that hell had vomited up all the frogs in existence. There was no such thing as eating or drinking any more, and all hastened to prepare for departure. The men found frogs in their hats, and the ladies were equally favored. Such a hurrying they all made to escape the presence of the frogs, that all was confusion within the house; and it was a wonder none were injured. And as they emerged from the premises, such a concert of frogs as greeted them only served to hasten their departure, not even the city folks feeling inclined to “tarry for a night.”

Various were the opinions to which this affair gave rise. Some even conjectured that their host had a pond of frogs for his own epicurean taste, and that a mischievous wag had set them all free. But Frank and his wife understood it all, and showed their horror in their countenances; though the guests thought it was only the frogs and not their guilt, that made them look so horror-stricken. In the next place, Frank got the name of “Old Pharaoh,” his place “Egypt,” and the great grand opening “The Plague of Frogs;” and all the pious ones considered their old minister’s son cursed for departing from the footsteps of his father; and through the gossip of servants all the comments came to the ears of Frank and his wife. Consequently, instead of feeling elated at the grand opening, they felt only depression, and were convinced by experience that riches alone did not constitute happiness.

A full description of the grand mansion and all its appurtenances, of the fabulous wealth of Frank, of the grand opening and all parts of the programme, of the episode of the first big bull-frog and the culmination of the horrible Egyptian-like swarms of them, of closing the great occasion abruptly and in disgust, was, on the following morning, in all the city papers, with comments and opinions in reference to all things connected therewith. Different editors and reporters had different opinions. While some

adduced natural causes for the occurrence, others, who thought themselves more scientific, offered very absurd reasons ; and again others declared the affair to be miraculous, and boldly asserted that it was a repetition of the the curse of Egypt, and for a similar cause—an account of which is as follows, and found in Exodus, chapter 8th :

“ And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs :

“ And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs.

“ And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

“ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people, and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord. And Moses cried unto the Lord because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. And the frogs died out ; and they gathered them together upon heaps ; and the land stank.”

Now this great scourge was enough to make Frank promise over again that he would, in the future, do right. And, as he had entirely ceased to pray, he concluded to begin again. He felt that he could better afford to part with the pirate's gold than to experience a repetition of the fearful ordeal through which he had already passed.

They had enough to do next day clearing away dead frogs and ruined articles, and restoring the house to order.

Frank saw no more frogs for a long time. He now concluded to redeem his obligations by building a church for the town. After this was all completed, he then built a hospital. He saw

no frogs during all this time; and he decided to have another party at his house, and have as grand an affair as the first.

He accordingly issued invitations to all the poor, the halt, and the blind to his feast, and then a general invitation to any who might feel disposed to come. Scores of the poor, the lame and the blind were there. It was a curious sight.

Several reporters and a number of ministers were present. Not a frog was seen. And all the world spoke as highly in praise of the affair, and in honor of Frank, as they had before in the opposite direction; hence he felt as much in degree elated and thankful as, on the other occasion, he felt depressed. He had now shown himself as good and wise as he was rich. And he felt that he not only had the favor of the poor, halt, lame and blind, but of his Maker too, and mankind in general, and the old pirate and frogs in particular.

He not only saw, but felt the contrast between the present and past as to his standing in society; and he felt that if the affairs of his life were to again be as he had experienced them, he would not only be willing to do good with the money he was holding in trust, but with his own too, if he could not escape in any other way.

It is fortunate that man can be made willing to do his duty. But, like others, there was danger of Frank relapsing and again backsliding.

He had now disposed of one million, and as there were no particular directions given him, he was only to follow his own judgment in doing good with the pirate's gold.

He finally advertised for relatives of any who had been robbed by pirates during a certain number of years, which must have included the entire period of old Blackheart, judging from the time of the robbery of his grandfather. He concluded that, in taking such a course, he might do what the old pirate would have done, had he lived long enough to reach those whom he had wronged. He required the clearest proofs from all who might claim to be heirs of such a piratical victim.

It is true this looked liked seeking the favor of the Evil One; though he sometimes felt liking making over to others the entire amount, that he might be relieved of the great duty of dispensing money holden in trust, when the benefits to him were so small, but he would soon give up that thought; and no sooner would he begin to entertain such an idea, than he would hear the croak of a big bull-frog, just as though his mind was known to the frogs. The following advertisement brought answers from several:

*“To Whom it may Concern:—*Information wanted of the heirs of any of the victims of the pirates during the period of——, which embraced the time of the piratical career of a noted pirate. To such it will be of advantage to apply, with clear proof, to F. F., at the office of this paper.”

It did look as though the old pirate had delegated his affairs to the right one, after all, and that his agent would fill the place which he himself could not. But after a season of respite from annoyance, Frank would yield to the temptation of Old Satan—who wanted to defer the release of the old pirate—and so grow bold again, and, as before, neglect his duty.

CHAPTER V.

FRANK now turned his attention to the numerous letters he received in response to his card; and though he had demanded clear proof, he began to feel indifferent, and there was danger of his bestowing the old pirate's money upon some who were not entitled to it, and who would prove to be no better than the old pirate had been.

He received a letter from one of his most active persecutors during his troubles among the frogs. He was quite willing to communicate with him, and though his proofs were far from satisfactory, yet in the old pirate's manuscript it was stated that any one obtaining any part of the fortune unjustly, would be as greatly

tormented as he himself would be should he neglect his duty, which Frank concluded would be quite satisfactory to him, as he would enjoy seeing the wicked man paid back in his own coin, while at the same time it would lead him to see that, inasmuch as he had rejoiced in his neighbor's downfall, a worse thing had come upon himself.

So Frank had twenty-five thousand dollars secretly sent to him, as that was what he claimed as the sum to which he was entitled. Others he served in a like manner, though he believed their claims well founded.

The man who had obtained the twenty-five thousand dollars had, in fact, forged all the proofs of his statement, and had received, what he had no right or title to, by false representations. But accompanying the money was a notice, stating that he would regret his course if he had been dishonest in the transaction. And, to his cost, he found it too true; for hardly had he invested his money before he found that riches bring a snare.

He had only settled down to a comfortable life, when many expressed surprise at his changing a poor house for a grand one. The change was so sudden and great for one in his mode of life, that many suggested dishonest means had been resorted to to obtain his riches. But the rumor could not be traced to its origin, which gratified him exceedingly, for he would have been very unwilling to show the source of his wealth in order to refute what he knew to be true.

But something now took place which surprised him very much, and all his family and friends. It did not surprise Frank, however, as he had his suspicions of the man; but having been anxious to get rid of what had been a bother to him, he did not look into the evidence as he would have done under other circumstances. He also remembered that the old pirate was to look after any one who obtained any of the money wrongfully, which was another reason why he was not so cautious, as they would be detected, and be compelled to do with the money, so obtained, as he had been

doing, and he, in this way, would find help in disposing of it, besides having the old pirate's attention turned in another direction. Thus, as we have said, Frank and his wife were not surprised at what transpired in the affairs of this cunning man.

The man who had been so smart in obtaining the money was named Webber. He was called "Elder," and was a prating hypocrite. He commenced life as a very low specimen of humanity, and had obtained a reputation for all conceivableness of deviltry. He would lie, cheat and steal; but when at his height of wickedness he was fearfully exposed, and to redeem himself he professed religion and joined the Methodist Church. He had been lame from early life; therefore, after his conversion, people were ready to say that, because of his lameness, he could not work, and that he was not to be censured like an able-bodied man who lived by the villainy of his wits rather than work. And the church thought that, inasmuch as he had to steal, lie and cheat to get along through life before conversion, that he had better be a minister, and by preaching obtain as much as he formerly did by cheating and stealing.

The Elder was a cunning knave, and thought that while he obtained an honest living by preaching to sinners, he could, under cover of his religion, gain just as much by his old tricks, and so lay up what he thus gained, instead of using it, and have treasure on earth as well as in heaven.

So he went on preaching, and soon had his advocates, as well as any other preacher; and as he was as much a watchman for any new devilish enterprise as he was on the walls of Zion, he discovered, as he thought, an opportunity to make something handsome.

He saw that, by a well-told story of his grandfather having been robbed, giving the date and amount of the robbery, and making oath that, according to his best knowledge and belief, the statement was correct, and also that he was the only known heir, backed by his influential standing as a Methodist minister, together

with recommendations from other clergymen, he might succeed in what he thought a new opening.

He succeeded with F. F., who was ready and willing to comply, and accept the statement as though there could be no mistake, or that it was as true as the Elder's gospel itself.

As we have stated, something new occurred in the Elder's career. Soon after settlement in his new house, he went on the Sabbath to preach, as usual, and took for his text :

“Lay not up treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven ; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Now, whether a good or evil spirit led him to take this text, it is impossible to determine ; but he undoubtedly thought himself happy in his selection, and expected to be so in his sermon.

He discoursed on earthly and heavenly riches, and showed the different ways of obtaining earthly and heavenly treasure, and also presented the contrast between the enjoyment of the two kinds of riches, and showed fully the durability of riches in Heaven, and the liability of earthly riches taking wings and flying away ; and as he reached this point in his remarks, and felt that he was having a good time and making a favorable impression, he heard a most unearthly bellowing right under his feet, as did also the whole congregation ; and though a lame man, and filled with holy boldness, and not afraid of the Devil, he gave a mighty leap and landed on the top of the pulpit. He then turned around to see if the very Devil himself was not at his heels, while many of the brethren and a few courageous sisters ran to see what sort of an unearthly monster had disturbed the meeting. To their surprise they beheld a great old bull-frog, looking as sedate and dignified as the Elder himself, only a great deal more so ; but in the twinkling of an eye he jumped through an open window and made his escape.

The Elder thought that some wicked boy had put the frog

there; but others, who saw him retire like a flash, thought he had come in accidentally the same way he went out. But it was an entirely new experience, and made a lasting impression on the Elder, as much so as his sermon had on his hearers.

Elder Webber had received too great a shock to do any more preaching that day, so he called on one of his "class-leaders" to close by prayer.

Some of the boys ran out immediately, after the frog took his short cut from the presence of the Elder; for they had never heard a bull bellow louder, nor ever saw so big a frog; and while some said he was large enough to ride home on, if they could but catch him, others wanted him to exhibit as a wonder. But he was gone from mortal sight.

Now, the Elder had ridden to church on account of his lameness; and as he usually rode in a gig when he was a professional horse-jockey, he still kept it up when riding alone; so, when he stepped into his gig, there sat the old bull-frog, which appeared to be as afraid of the Elder as though he thought him the "Evil One," and with another bellow he jumped, and this time directly on the Elder's horse, which, being a high-spirited animal, quicker than thought sprang into a run for his life. The Elder, being upon his feet, went heels over head, and, landing among the brethren and sisters, knocked several of them sprawling, and all the breath out of himself. The fright, somersault, and jar completely confused him; and as one of the brethren inquired: "Are you dead, brother Webber?" he replied, "No, but I can't speak." But presently he recovered his breath, and inquired where he was. Probably he thought he had reached the end of his career.

He soon revived, and rode home with one of the brethren. He said he would never preach there again. He was certain the boys had done the trick.

The old horse, with the gig, kept on running till there was nothing left but the horse and a few pieces of the harness. He had been as greatly frightened as the Elder himself. The experience

was entirely new to him, and the weight of the frog alone—which was as large as a full-grown cat—to say nothing of its terrific bellowing and scratching, was sufficient of itself to frighten the horse most to death.

When the Elder arrived at home, feeling more “out of sorts” than it would be Christian-like to manifest, he went to his sleeping-room to lie down while his wife prepared dinner; for they had not expected him, as he usually dined with the brethren on Sundays. Thus while he was helping his flock to lay up treasure in Heaven, he was laying up some for himself on earth by saving his dinners.

So, when he retired he felt the need of a spiritual comforter, and as he always kept a good supply of the best Holland gin on hand, he took a full dram, to make up for the spiritual comfort out of which he had been cheated. After thus strengthening his shattered nerves, he turned to his bed and lay down; but, oh, horror! his face came in contact with a monster frog, which, with a hoarse croak, and a squirt of cold water in the Elder’s face, hopped off.

This third encounter with the “devilish frog,” as the Elder called him, came very near throwing him into a fit. Had it not been for the gin which he had taken, and another “swig” after his fright in bed, he might have fared worse. But forthwith he went for the frog; and the two big drams having begun to work strongly, he rushed, in his limping way, all over the house, occasionally obtaining a glimpse of the frog, but never overtaking it.

His family by this time, and several of the brethren who came in, thought him out of his mind by reason of his adventure at the church; and in the latter instance the frog having appeared and disappeared without being seen by any one but the Elder himself, they thought it only imaginary on his part, which not only irritated him, but led to his taking another dram.

Elder Webber’s adventure spread like “wild-fire,” as all marvellous and laughable news will, and Frank at once heard of

it; and though he knew by experience how to pity, it is presumed that he was heartless in the present instance. He felt, too, that while he was having a respite from old Blackheart, he was entitled to look on as others had in his case.

That night Elder Webber heard a bellowing and croaking of frogs in all directions—under the bed—on the bed—in all the rooms, and around the house—all sorts and sizes being present. All at once he realized that the “Old Boy,” instead of boys, had introduced the first old frog, and all the subsequent ones. He at once covered his head with the bed-clothes; but to his disgust and alarm he found several frogs for company. He now became unusually lively. He made a retreat out of the door, only half clad. But he ran into trouble instead of out, for he found himself surrounded with frogs. Live coals of fire would not make one more lively than cold, clammy frogs. And this was the Elder's experience, judging from his antic abilities.

The entire family had been aroused. How the frogs got into the house was a mystery which no one could solve.

Elder Webber remembered the experience of Frank Friendless, and he thought at once that their cases were similar. And inasmuch as Frank would know how to pity him, and be capable of advising him, he made a call on him; and this is what he said:

“Mr. Friendless, you have heard of my singular encounter with the frogs, and as your experience and judgment will enable you, and your goodness of heart prompt you, to give me good advice, I have come to see you; and I hope you will not consider it an intrusion, but will counsel me like a brother.”

The Elder had changed his mind about Frank since his own froggy experience, and realized that, when he was scoffing at Frank's Egyptian-like curse, his perplexities by inhuman monsters were quite enough to bear without adding to his already too great burden by persecution. He was now glad to go to him, that, by availing himself of his experience, he might escape what he feared had come upon him for meting out such a measure as he had to an already afflicted family.

“Elder Webber,” replied Frank, “I need not relate my experience with the frogs, as that is already known to all. Such singular occurrences can not be hidden. But a portion of my experience, I think, will be an advantage to you, which is this: You know that I have done some important good works; though I do not speak of them as a subject of which to boast, but to intimate to you the course I took to rid myself of the frogs; for certain I am that I had to sacrifice gold to the cause of humanity to appease *him* (meaning old Blackheart), who sent the frogs to me, as I am of my own existence. So you see the course I took, and the results. If my experience in the manner of finding relief can be of advantage to you, you are welcome to it. Though I have not disclosed to the public my reason for doing such apparent good works (I cannot call them acts of benevolence), yet the people all know what I have done; but to you I tell my *motive*, that perchance you may profit thereby.”

Frank was honest in his statement. His good works were not acts of benevolence of his own, but in behalf of the old pirate, that he might be assisted in the other world, while Frank got the credit in this. He was only doing with the gold as directed. It was not his, only as trustee; and the Elder by his knavish wit had obtained, to a limited extent, a sub-agency; therefore Frank knew where the trouble with the Elder was to be traced, and how to talk to him, as the Elder by his future experience was made to understand.

“Well, well,” said the Elder, “I suppose you *happened* to do the good deeds, and the frogs *happened* to leave at that juncture. But what can I do? I have only a comfortable home and surroundings; I can not do as you were enabled to do. So, if there is no other way of escape from the attacks of the frogs, I fear they will be my companions continually.”

“Of course,” added Frank, “if you do not feel it your duty to follow my example, you will not; but I venture to prophesy that you will not only be willing but glad to give all you possess,

before you get through with your experience with the frogs, or at least before you find yourself where you were one year ago."

"You think then," said the Elder, in conclusion, "that I have an offended God to appease, and that, if I had not come to you for counsel, I might have gone on in my blindness, or *stumbled* on the right course—as you think you did. Well, you must have had a guilty conscience, if your course was prompted to release you from the thralldom of the frogs."

"I considered the visitation of the frogs a curse, as they were in the days of old king Pharaoh; and you will live to see whether I am right or wrong," replied Mr. F. Friendless.

On his way home Elder Webber thought over his situation, and here is his soliloquy:

"I don't see how Friendless can be right, for I used to serve the Devil right smartly, and do now, when I get a good sly chance. And I know if I had been going to get punished in this world, it would have begun before. I don't believe a word of his advice. And he spoke as though the intimations of some, in reference to my worldly prosperity of late, might be true—that is, that I obtained my property by some other than right means; and though I did play smart, no one knows of it, for it was a fortune none living can say was not mine, and therefore there was no risk, as none could dispute what I pretended took place before any one now living was born. But can it possibly have been that this was the very cause of my trouble? I will watch closely. Perhaps it only happened so in my case. But I would have preferred its happening to some one else."

As the Elder rode along he saw, with disgust, a big bull-frog sitting directly in the middle of the street, and, quick as a flash, he gave his horse a smart blow with his whip (it was the same horse which, with the Elder, had been so greatly disgusted with the frog at the church). He gave a start forward, with the design of passing on one side of the great monster. But the Elder wished to pass over him, and so crush him to death, out of

revenge ; for he looked just like the one he encountered at church. As the horse shied, he pulled the rein the other way ; but the frog making two or three great springs, placed himself a rod or two in advance, and sedately looked at the swiftly approaching team. This so infuriated the Elder and his horse that they both seemed determined, this time, to run him down. But the frog, making a jump, landed in the carriage, with his regular bellow. The horse let fly his heels at the same time ; and the Elder, between having the frog for a passenger and the kicking of the horse, let fall the reins. The horse, with lightning-like speed, took his way homeward ; and through the Elder shouting to the animal to check his speed, and the hoarse bellowing of the frog, he was nearly frightened to death. Thus the Elder, seeing his life endangered by remaining in the wagon, jumped from his seat. But fortunately he fell on soft ground, and was only stunned. When he opened his eyes, the first object that met his sight was his old companion, the frog, sitting within a foot of his face.

Had the Devil been there himself the Elder could not have felt worse. He was soon on his feet, and, curious to relate, the frog was by his side, or very near, all the way. He knew now that the presence of the frog meant more than he was willing to acknowledge.

He was soon met by one of his neighbors, who had been despatched for him after the return of the horse with the shattered carriage. The neighbor seemed to feel that the Elder was possessed of the Devil, or that the frogs were, and was not a little alarmed to see and hear the old frog. He returned with the Elder, as fast as his steady old horse could go, the frog keeping company by long leaps and a constant bellowing.

The Elder was glad to get home, and his neighbor to get away. Soon after, the frog too, on giving a parting bellow, hopped suddenly off.

The Elder was nearly used up, and was as sick of frogs as he had been of being poor ; but still he thought he could stand it as

long as the frogs could. So he took more gin and went to bed, and to sleep, but only for a short time. Frogs in vast numbers soon began to hop into the house, which caused his entire family, in alarm, to run to the Elder and beseech him to get up and pray. So he hurried up and turned out more gin ; and just as he put it to his mouth a little frog hopped in, and down the Elder's throat it went at a gulp.

Now this was having "frogs in every style." But the Elder having caught a glimpse of him, and having felt him scratch and struggle as he swallowed him, saw that he was in a serious condition, and in alarm called in a doctor, who gave him an emetic, which brought the frog up, still alive. The doctor said he did not see how they could help getting frogs down their throats unless they kept their mouths shut, and advised them to strain all liquids, as the frog had a natural inclination for water. He also said it was fortunate that they did not bite. He had no further advice to give than, inasmuch as frogs were not poisonous, but good for food, that they all turn to and eat all they could, and thereby diminish the vast number ; though he thought it best to cook them properly. The doctor was a Frenchman.

The poor Elder felt like taking himself off, and so did his entire family, and thus leave the frogs in possession. They started for their nearest neighbor's, but to their dismay found themselves accompanied by the frogs. When they arrived the neighbor had to close their doors against the frogs, which excluded the Elder and all his family.

Such a bellowing and croaking and piping as the frogs made, nearly drove the Elder to despair and desperation. He saw clearly that he was the object of interest to the frogs, and so did his family. They all started upon the run again for their home ; and as the family arrived in advance of the Elder, they were elated to find the frogs all gone. Soon he came limping back, "more dead than alive," but found even his own door shut against him, while he was surrounded by frogs, making their

infernal din, hopping on him, squirting water over him, making him think the Devil himself was in them, and that he was really cursed of the Most High. His family were safely inside out of their reach.

The poor wretched man felt, for the first time in his life, like praying in earnest. Confessing all the sins of his past life, both general and particular, he acknowledged what a hypocrite he was, and expressed fears that Heaven would be shut against him, as were all the doors on earth. He then confessed his last great fraud in obtaining the property he had lately acquired. He promised to sell it all and give it away, or dispose of it to the advantage of mankind, if God would only save him from the frogs.

When he arose from his kneeling position during prayer, there was not a frog to be seen, though but a moment before he had heard the loudest bellowing of all—which was probably the old pirate's signal for suspending operations.

The wonderful news soon spread that the Elder had prayed off the frogs. But he knew, and his family knew, that his promises, made in despair of any help but from God, had been his refuge from the scourge.

He was now convinced that Frank Friendless was right; and to him next day he went, with his new resolution, to enlist him in buying all he had on earth, that he might be rid of the frogs; and before night he had sold out, and made over to the town twenty-five thousand dollars, to be used for the widows and orphans and the poor of every class. So ended the Elder's experience among the frogs, leaving him as poor as ever, and in the same condition that many would be in should they follow the dictates of their consciences.

Though Elder Webber wondered why he was obliged to give to the poor, to appease his Maker, on account of the trick he had played to obtain the twenty-five thousand dollars, he could not understand why frogs did not trouble him on account of worse or

greater sins than he thought this one to be. Frank could have enlightened him, but he gave Frank a wide berth for a long time thereafter.

The Elder got frightened once, after this, leading him to tremble with apprehension that he might have to make a clean breast of all his sins. He was taking a little stroll by himself, limping along, with his hands crossed behind him, pondering over the events of his life, when he came suddenly across a big bull-frog; whereupon he fell upon his knees. But the frog, muttering, jumped as though frightened out of its wits, or as if a great serpent had made his appearance. This was the last frog he saw for some time. But he hated frogs worse than he did old Satan.

CHAPTER VI.

WE must now return to Frank. He had witnessed the discomfiture of the Elder with great satisfaction. He felt that he was justly dealt by. For a long time he had seen no frogs, and there was danger of his neglecting his duty.

He had been praised so greatly by all for his great work of benevolence in the various ways mentioned, that he felt he was not only the richest man in town, but the best and most useful; hence he believed he was so strong in the favor of God and man, that the old pirate with all the frogs on earth could not frighten him again, or bring about his downfall.

Now, this was a dangerous state of mind and heart to be in. It did seem as though he meant to follow the example of old Pharaoh, and so deserve the name; while the old pirate would be likely to be more violent, should he start on another rampage, than he had ever been.

As to Frank's wife, we may now show her interests in the affairs of life. She had proved a good wife, so far, and thought just

as her husband did about all things. They had now two children, a son and a daughter. Of course they were gratified at this, and saw clearly that they had laid a foundation for a great generation and name.

At this time the little boy was four years old, and as bright and lovely as a child could be. He was their first, and their joy and their pride. The parents both thought him perfection, for beauty and intelligence. Their whole soul seemed bound up in him. He was to be, ultimately, their representative. To him their wealth and great name were to be intrusted. He, in fact, had become an earthly god, their idol. It is true, they loved their little girl, but the boy was their first-born.

Frank and his wife counselled each other in reference to the vast wealth that was still in their possession. It was the opinion of Frank's wife that they deserved all the balance now in their hands, which was about one-half of the pirate's money.

They had had the pleasure of spending two millions of his money. But they did not realize that the exercise of the privilege had made them famous, or that their great and honorable standing was obtained at the expense of some one else's gold.

Had they, in reality, been as good at heart as outwardly, and as the world thought them, the benefits accruing to them in spending the money would have satisfied their ambition. This spirit of avarice in Mrs. Frank Friendless met with a hearty response by Frank; hence they found themselves united in evil as well as good.

One day, just before night, as Mr. Frank Friendless and his wife, accompanied by their children, were passing through the hall to the door, the little boy ran on in advance; and having reached and opened the door, a big old bull-frog, with big bulging eyes and great mouth, and with a great hoarse croak like the roaring of a bull, leaped in, and directly upon the little boy, who was frightened nearly to death, and who, with a scream, fell to the floor in a fit.

It seemed hard and unjust to seize the little boy as a victim for its parents' fault. But then it must have been right, as the example in old Pharaoh's case clearly showed, wherein all the first-born were slain, as we read (Exodus, chapter 12th, 29th verse): "And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt."

The parents had enough to do to attend to their child, without giving any attention to the frog. The little boy continued so long convulsed, that in alarm they sent for their doctor, who soon made his appearance, and administered ether, which seemed to break the convulsion, and he was soon restored to consciousness.

The doctor now questioned the parents in reference to his previous health, and also as to what had occurred to throw him into the fit—as it was clearly to be seen that he had received a great nervous shock; but they pretended ignorance as to the cause, saying that it came on suddenly and without any previous derangement.

The doctor was perplexed, for he knew the child must have been greatly frightened. But they could not bear to tell the cause. They remembered the party, when frogs were so plenty they broke it up and destroyed their pleasure, and remembered the scandal that followed. They therefore pleaded ignorance. Unfortunately for their pride, at this juncture a big old frog gave a great hoarse croak, and in an instant the boy was again convulsed. Seeing this, the doctor said the case was now clear. They then acknowledged the facts. They were exposed, and saw no other alternative.

The doctor ordered the boy to be taken to the most central room, where it would be impossible for him to hear any sound or noise whatever, and where he soon became quiet. After giving directions, he left.

The doctor had been a guest on the occasion of the great aristocratic party, and had participated in all its parts, even in the

reception of the frog demonstration. He remembered all, and what was said.

As he passed out he was saluted with such a serenade, by scores of frogs, that he hastened in disgust to his carriage. What was his horror to find it half full of frogs, which, upon his appearance, leaped out in all directions, squirting water, and croaking like crazy frogs, while the doctor exclaimed:

“The Devil is in the frogs surely! or the days of old have returned to remind us of what has been forgotten. This manifestation is a fearful curse, whether it is a natural result of the condition of the locality, or a miraculous display of God’s power.”

As the frogs took their departure they seemed very indifferent as to the direction they went; hence the doctor’s horse shared in a shower of them, of all sizes, all croaking as though they were trying to outdo each other. Of course the horse was no more used to or pleased with their very lively presence than was the doctor; and had he not been hitched, there might have been a more serious calamity than had already occurred; for he reared and snorted as though the Devil was in him as well as in the frogs. But he soon quieted down, and behaved like an intelligent horse. So the doctor returned to his home, cogitating upon the wonderful works of God and the funny freaks of his creatures,

He tried to solve this phenomenon, as well as that which had astonished the entire vicinity on the occasion of the great party. He could not arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, and therefore determined to have an interview with Frank, and see if he could throw any light on the subject. He concluded Frank had made it a study; besides, he was no inferior man; while the interests involved in the affair must have prompted him to seek a solution in every possible manner.

Ah! Frank did not have to pry into what was so great a mystery to many, yet he felt unwilling to publish the source of his fortune, or the cause of the frogs coming upon him. He was

afraid he would be considered in league with the Devil, and that he would be as greatly shunned therefor as once before; for since that day his wise and benevolent course had redeemed him in the eyes of the world.

He and his wife fairly cursed the old pirate and the frogs; yet they knew it was their own fault, though they were inclined to believe that the treasure itself was cursed of God, and that even his and his wife's portion might be a curse to them, after all. They tried to make themselves believe that it was not because they did not continue to do as directed, but because it had been possessed by the old pirate, and by him obtained in so unlawful a manner.

When the doctor arrived, next day, and found his patient very weak—though he had no more fits—he gave encouragement that he might fully recover from the shock; though, should the occurrence be repeated, he could not tell what the result might be. He now inquired, in the following manner, what was thought to be the cause of the strange phenomenon:

“Mr. Friendless, what do you think of this wonderful visit, or rather, visitation of so many frogs? You must have an opinion, whether right or wrong. It is a visit to you in particular, as is evident from the fact that nowhere else, at the same time, can such an occurrence be found to have taken place; and this could hardly be possible, for from appearances all the frogs on earth had swarmed in and about your house.”

Frank was somewhat inclined to tell the doctor all he knew about the affair—as he was both a good and wise man—but he shrank from meeting public opinion. He knew all would say that he was in league with the Devil or evil spirits, and perhaps doubt his right to the vast treasure he had found, discard what he might say in reference to the manner of discovery, the authenticity of his and his wife's grandfather's loss, and even of the parchment itself, and assert that he had taken this course in order that he might keep as his own that which of right belonged to the public only.

He finally pleaded ignorance in reference to the cause, and said he supposed it was only accidental; perhaps the location of his house happened to suit the frogs. The doctor retired, as far removed from light on the subject as ever.

The next day frogs were as plenty as on the day before. They were in all directions, hopping on the servants, into the milk-pails—into everything, in fact. They came by thousands. Frank then ordered all hands to slay all within reach. And the slaughter was terrible. They all joined in the fray, and thousands were killed; and though they buried them by the bushel, many of the wounded and dead fell among the grass and in places where they could not be found; and the next warm day rapidly decomposing them, the atmosphere was filled with a stench quite unendurable. Upon the arrival of the doctor, soon after, he ordered disinfectants to be thrown around. This changed the case for the better, but it did not entirely remove the evil. Consequently a low typhus fever followed, and all in the house were prostrated. The doctor, with a corps of nurses, had his hands full; while the circumstances of the affair coming to the knowledge of the people, they were as ready to believe Frank cursed as they had of late thought him favored of Heaven.

Frank and his wife both prayed to be spared, and confessed to their minister that they knew all their troubles were because of their great wickedness. The minister tried to comfort them, yet he was inclined to think the hand of God was in the affliction, and he told them so. But old Blackheart's hand was in the affair, and they knew it. They said they believed the Devil or evil spirits were the cause of their trouble; whereupon an old bull-frog, which had escaped the slaughter, croaked from under the bed. This caused Frank and his wife, in their physical prostration and disturbance of mind, to tremble as with an ague-fit, and to cover their heads with the bedclothes, which very much surprised the clergyman.

Frank and his wife promised, if God would spare them, that

they would do every duty, even if they were required to give away all their substance; and the minister prayed mightily to God in their behalf. Through the influence of their resolutions, the encouragement of their pastor, the skill of their physician, and the gracious interposition of Heaven, they were spared. The atmosphere again cleared, and once more hope and joy filled the hearts of Frank and his wife.

They clearly saw that holding money in trust was a very responsible and dangerous position, and they determined to carry out their resolution and dispose of all as soon as possible.

The people wondered as greatly as in the first instance of the frogs making themselves such an intolerable nuisance, and as curiously flocked to see and hear as they did on the former occasion, and as greatly filled the house as the frogs had done, though not so annoyingly, except that Frank and his wife, on hearing themselves discussed in no very favorable terms, were anything but pleased therewith. They revived the name of old "King Pharaoh," and again called his place "Egypt," and his strange visitation "The Plague of Frogs."

All his trials, and what followed as a result of them, now made Frank fully disgusted with his life. He began to wish that all the old pirate's fortune, with his grandfather's and his wife's grandfather's, had remained where old Blackheart had buried it. A neglect of duty caused him keenly to deprecate his untrustworthiness; for he knew in his heart that this last frog-plague was, as well as his first scourge by them, in consequence of his default in the discharge of his obligations. Frank now felt genuine repentance, that is, the kind that brings forth works.

He now gave with a lavish hand to every benevolent enterprise, to schools, churches, and in every conceivable way; so that all saw, and said, that it was not because of a hard and stingy heart that he was cursed with the plague of frogs.

His boy was now quite well again. But what a severe lesson had been the illness of his first-born! and how much better Frank

would have enjoyed life had he been a poor man, or even earned his wealth by his own industry.

They were quite happy, however, now they were trying to do right; for both Frank and his wife shared equally in all their sorrows and joys as in all the great responsibility and management of their affairs. And when they reflected and called to mind what the old pirate had said about gaining his freedom when restitution was fully made, they did not wonder that he had raised the Devil with them, or blame him for all the evils he had brought upon them. So far as they then saw, it was all their own fault.

CHAPTER VII.

FRANK had been so faithful the past few years, that he only had about one million more of the old pirate's money to dispose of; and though he had done so wonderfully for his fellow-men, he was still the richest man in town, and for many towns around.

It had been a long time since he saw a frog, and he and his wife indulged a hope that they had become extinct; but if they were not, they concluded the old pirate had become satisfied with their performance. They had been so greatly praised for what they had done, they were led to think if he were not satisfied he must be worse than old Satan himself. They finally concluded that, because of their faithfulness thus far, and their sufferings, they had well earned the balance; and thus feeling, they so acted. They suspended their acts of charity, which was noticed by the people, who concluded that they had to suspend.

Frank was like many others who change from good to bad, and from bad to good, very often through a lifetime. His children were among the best, and his wife was worthy of her position as a wealthy man's wife and the mistress of a great establishment. Their little boy was now six years old, and a finer boy of his age could not be found.

About this time strange and wonderful occurrences transpired, causing as great a change in their quiet mode of life as the curse of frogs had caused.

One night, after retiring, Frank and his wife were very much startled at having some one knock at their room door, as they thought, and he arose to answer the summons, supposing it to be one of the servants; but what was his surprise to find no one there. He spoke, but received no answer, and wondering, he again retired; but no sooner had he done so than the knock was repeated. He inquired what was wanted—for he still thought it some one of the family—and for a reply a rap, louder than before, was repeated; but upon opening the door no one was to be seen. This was repeated till they became alarmed, and concluded it must be a supernatural warning.

Now, for all this, they did not think of old Captain Blackheart. And though it was before the phenomenon called “Spirit Rappings,” yet they felt it was something unearthly. This wonderful rapping was repeated night after night, till they were quite weary and vexed. It was a wonder to them why it always occurred in the night, just as though it was done by some wicked, intelligent power, preferring darknes rather than light, being actuated by some evil motive, thinking the probability of tormenting them effectually greater at that hour than when busy with the affairs of life.

About this time the little boy seemed to become a somnambulist. He would arise and walk all about the house; and at such times a great rapping would be heard on the doors, on the walls, and even on the head-boards of the beds. Often the little fellow would place his hands, trumpet-like, to his mouth, and cry out: “Ship ahoy!” and again, “Man the guns! Fight till the death of the last man!” And after he had been walking in his sleep for an hour or so, he would waken and go back to bed, and sometimes without waking.

That Frank and his wife were alarmed, was not surprising. They feared their boy was going crazy. But in the morning he

would appear all right again. After a season they called their doctor; but he could discover no derangement in the child's system, and told them he would outgrow it, suggesting that they should correct his meals at night and his play during the day. But this wonderful condition of things continued the same as before.

Finally the doctor was invited to remain all night, that he might have his own observation to aid him in forming a correct opinion of the case, and, doing so, he saw the boy in the peculiar state into which he now so often entered, and he also heard the rapping. He at first thought Friendless was cutting up some prank, but soon became convinced that he had nothing to do with it. He then said he believed it to be the Devil. He refused to remain longer, and left in alarm and disgust, fearing that he himself, though a man of science, might become possessed of the Devil also.

The family were now tormented night and day. The rapping all over the house, wherever they went, continued, and seemed to accompany them.

The little boy now often went into the somnambulistic state, even when he was awake and at his play in the daytime; and sometimes he would swear like an old "man-of-warsman."

One day, while all was quiet, the household were startled by hearing a great crash and the rattling of glass. Upon hastening to the room, there sat the little boy at play with some toys. When asked what in the world he had done, he innocently answered, "Nothing." But there before him was a mirror, costing a large amount, all in pieces, having had a large book hurled through it. The boy had not noticed it, which satisfied all that, though he must have done it, he was unconscious of the act. So they all began to think that the boy was bewitched.

Thus things went on for a long time, people flocking to see and hear, but none could explain the strange things they heard and witnessed.

One day, while most of the family were away, the little boy obtained a pole, and, fastening a black shawl to it, run it out through the window, and then procuring an old broom, he called on all to surrender, or he would sink the ship.

Now, upon hearing of this new development, the parents, for the first time, began to think that the old pirate had bewitched their boy. And as they had congratulated themselves upon their escape from the frogs without spending all their money, and had laughed at poor Elder Webber because he had to spend all of his, they now felt alarmed. They remembered the old pirate had said in the manuscript, that if he failed through the frogs to accomplish all his work, he would be enabled, after restitution had been made sufficiently to advance him above the frogs, to take another form, and accomplish in that what he had not succeeded in doing in the former agency. Therefore they feared he had got into their boy, and would also get into them, and so they, pirate-like, might go to killing each other—they supposing that he could get into as great a number of people as he seemed to have got into frogs.

But still it did not occur to them that they might appease the demon by doing as they had done when the Devil, or the old pirate, was in the frogs; and it was a long time before they decided what course to take. They had many lessons to learn before they were led to do what was right.

Frank and his wife now fully discussed their situation, and came to the conclusion that the old pirate had changed his mode of operation, and wondered what he would do next. They concluded, however, upon considering the matter, that he would not take possession of either of them—not realizing that they already had a worse Devil in themselves than the old pirate was—but they were horrified at the thought that their boy might become like the old pirate. While they were thus debating the subject, old Black-heart was getting ready to give them the greatest surprise they had received since making his acquaintance.

One day, while they were away from home, and the servants not being so watchful as when the eye of their master or mistress was upon them, the little boy did what the old pirate could not make the frogs do: he took matches, and in fifteen minutes had the grandest house in all the country on fire in half a dozen places.

Soon the servants were alarmed, and hastened to alarm others and to put out the fire; but all to no purpose. The boy, with a small hatchet, stood in the main stairway, and when any one approached he would cry out, "No quarter! Rob, kill, and then burn the ship!" The servants were not only horror-stricken at the sight of the fire, but also at the boy's fiendish appearance. After the fire had got beyond all control, he retired to a safe distance, and with great glee clapped his hands and cried out, "Dead men tell no tales. Hip, hip, hurrah!"

At this juncture his parents returned, and at once took in the situation. They saw that several hundred thousands of dollars had been swept away by one stroke of ill fortune; besides, they must endure the disgrace of having a boy that was worse than the Devil himself (for Satan did not do such infernal things); and then, it was so very inconvenient.

The poor fools became blinded at last, and would not believe that the old pirate had anything to do with their boy, but thought it might be Satan himself. They now feared that their idol of a son was not born so good after all. They had to watch him day and night; but for all that he continued to do all sorts of mischief, until it did really appear that he must be totally depraved, and fully controlled by old Beelzebub himself.

One day he procured a pair of scissors, and completely trimmed the tails of his father's best span of horses, shearing close to the skin, so that the poor horses had nothing but the bone of their tails for a switch and ornament. His father, this time, was angry, though he laughed at the ludicrous sight. Of course he could not drive his team, and so had to use an inferior pair.

But one night Frank thought he could be denied the privilege of using his best horses no longer, and, as in the darkness of night their tails did not look so singular, he had them taken out for a drive; and as they had been idle for sometime, "they felt their oats" mightily. So taking his wife and children, he started on his way.

The horses would not bear the least touch of the whip when they were used every day, and now it would be dangerous to drive them at all. As they started off they began switching each other with their whip-like tails, and presently they were going like a whirlwind. They kept on, in spite of all efforts to check them, while the little boy often cried out, "Steady your helm!" Their course was directly towards the river, and into it they dashed. Fortunately they all escaped, as many persons were present to render assistance; but the horses were both drowned; while the little boy, climbing to the top of the carriage, sang out, "Ship ahoy!"

Now, the boy had never seen a sailor, and how he could have learned sailor phrases was as much a mystery as anything connected with their strange affairs.

They all soon recovered from the shock of the adventure, but were in constant dread of some new outbreak of the boy. This condition of things was very perplexing, as at this time they were temporarily settled in an inferior house, while men by the score were building another grand structure, requiring much of the time and attention of Mr. Friendless.

One day, having to leave home, and the boy being asleep, they securely tied his hands and feet, and left him on the bed. They had just reached their destination, which was only a short distance, when the boy made his appearance, he having learned their whereabouts from a servant.

They asked him who untied him, and he answered that he had not been tied, which convinced them he had been in an unconscious, or trance-like state during the untying.

About this time they found him writing an uncommonly good hand, altogether different from his usual style ; and this is what he wrote, and which his parents read with horror.

“ I am Captain Blackheart. As you have done something in the way of complying with my instructions, I have been enabled to rise above the frogs, and now show you my power through your boy. Hence you had better take heed and finish up your work before you have nothing to bestow. But even this would not save you from torment, any more than it would prevent my full restoration, which would follow because of my continuing to torment you for your unfaithfulness. This I should delight in ; for I now like to see justice done. And it would be just to thus deal with you. You had better therefore dispose of the balance you now wrongfully hold, in the same manner. In so doing you will get rid of me also. And unless you follow my advice, and thus secure my full release, so that I shall not have to look after you, you will ultimately find that I have become free in consideration of having tormented you, while you will take the place which I at present occupy. Then be wise.”

Frank and his wife were so much astonished that they hardly knew what to do for their safety, or what to do with their boy ; but they finally concluded to put him where he could not be the means, through old Blackheart's power, or through his own inherent devilishness, of ruining them entirely. In this way they thought to head off the old pirate in spite of his evil power over their fortunes.

They had no power over the frogs, and so in respect to them were helpless ; but the boy was under their control. So they conceived the plan of building a cage, and had one made of very substantial posts and bars, and placed therein his toys, and such other articles as would interest him.

They took this course because they did not mean to be driven by an old praictical demon to do differently from what they chose. How strange that parents could thus sacrifice their child's

liberty; their darling boy, too! One would think they could have been willing to become beggars, rather than to have their boy enter a cage as a maniacal prisoner.

Their excuse was, that they had tried tying him, times without number, and had locked him in a room by himself, but all to no purpose; hence they determined to conquer the boy, as in accomplishing this they would defeat and conquer old Blackheart. They knew but little about the power controlling their boy; but they learned much ultimately. They believed it would be for their future advantage, including the boy's also, to thus restrain him of his liberty to bring ruin on all. They grew more blind, and harder of heart, like old Pharaoh.

Though, as an honest biographer, we have to present the facts as they actually transpired, regardless of what may be thought of our theological views, yet we can hardly refrain from making here this statement as a digression.

If the inhabitants of the invisible world were permitted to do all that their abilities would enable them to do, perhaps greater wonders would be seen than Frank and his wife witnessed. But the Infinite Spirit holds all finite spirits under His control or in His power; and no farther than He permits can any spirit go, whether good or evil; but just so far as He sees proper they may go, though that permission may be incomprehensible to us.

After weeping over their boy, they put him in his cage, and he, not being pleased with such treatment, inquired the cause of it. They then enumerated all his previous evil deeds; explained the results following, and told him that it was not to punish him, but to prevent him from repeating them.

He could not be made to believe that he was the author of so much mischief, for he knew nothing of the pranks that he had performed. He therefore could not appreciate the anxiety and motive of his parents, nor see the justice of his imprisonment.

All the community learned of the affair, and the wonderful story spread without losing any of its interest. It was said that

the boy was possessed of the Devil, which made the avaricious parents unhappy.

Well, the boy retired to his bed, and soon went to sleep, and so did his parents. But old Captain Blackheart did not ; he was wide awake.

In the morning when the parents arose and went to see their little son, they were thunderstruck to find him gone, and the cage closed as when they left it.

They were alarmed, and thought at once that the Devil had carried him off. But finally, in looking for him, they were agreeably surprised to find him in his own room, fast asleep.

They then returned to the cage, and examined it in all its parts. The bars were only four inches apart, while the door remained locked, and the key was still in the pocket of Mr. Friendless. They were puzzled, for the mystery was beyond their comprehension.

If they did not feel like crying out, "Great is the mystery of godliness," we think they felt like saying, "Great are the mysterious works of Satan ;" and we cannot wonder at it. Whether Captain Blackheart made Frank, through the same power he claimed to exert over the boy, open the cage, or whether the boy did it in his sleep, or whether it was some other invisible power, as some might suggest, we have no means to determine ; we can only present the fact, and leave all to puzzle over the incomprehensible mystery.

They were reluctant to tie him in addition to putting him in his cage. They were certain no one could get out ; and why the boy should succeed they could not understand. So they questioned him about his escape ; but all he could tell them was this :

"A man, having a sword, came and opened the cage and took me out, and took me to my room and placed me in bed. I thought you had changed your mind, and sent him to do so. I asked him his name, and he told me he was Captain Blackheart, and a great friend to us all. So I thanked him, and he then left.

"Oh! he looked so good and noble, as though he would do anything for any one."

Whatever the boy's vision, it is probable that Captain Blackheart had changed as greatly in looks as in principle; for when one sees his errors and seeks to undo all the evils of his life, his countenance changes with his heart.

The parents were amazed, but more so when their little boy wrote the following letter and directed it to his father:

"MR. FRANK FRIENDLESS, SIR :—I am a friend to you and your family, and in particular to your little boy. You stand on slippery ground, as I once did. It is through him that I shall show you that I tell the truth, and that the work of my own salvation will be accomplished. CAPTAIN BLACKHEART."

If Frank could have believed that it was the old pirate influencing his boy, he might have taken a different course. He did seem to credit the manuscript concerning his influencing the frogs, and he had great reason to; but he was unwilling to believe that he was managing his boy. Nevertheless they determined to baffle old Blackheart, in spite of his boasted power over their son, let his agency be what it might. So they concluded to watch the next night; and in order not to disturb the boy, they sat in darkness, Frank having two men for company. But poor foolish men! they were soon sound asleep. They afterward thought it was natural sleep; at any rate they fell into a deep sleep, just as those did who guarded the apostles, when an angel opened the prison door, leading them forth and leaving all things as they were. And thus it was with Frank and his two friends.

In the morning they found the boy in his room, quietly sleeping, who, upon awaking, said he did not know when he left the cage, as he did not awake.

The next night, after the boy was asleep, they tied him firmly,

beside putting a clasp about his ankle and fastening the chain thereto attached to one of the posts. They also kept watch during the entire night; and, sure enough, so he remained. They now thought they had gained the victory. But the next night proved the contrary; for in the morning the boy was gone, while the chain remained unfastened and the clasp unlocked. Why the boy was left undisturbed the previous night, we cannot say, as we did not manage the affair. We can record the facts only. It may be conjectured, however, that one night was required by the agency doing the wonders to investigate the new obstruction, and so be prepared to remove it on the night following.

The next night, one of the men with Frank occupied the cage with the boy, and each had a rope around his body connecting with the lad, thinking thus they would feel him move, and so be awakened if they went to sleep.

But he was gone in the morning, while they found themselves tied to each other in a very incomprehensible manner, and with a knot entirely new to them. Frank said he believed the Devil tied them. To free themselves without the aid of others and the use of a knife was impossible; and while all were busy in their endeavors to untie the men, what was their surprise to have the little boy spring forward and cry out: "Avast there, you land-lubbers! look and learn! Remember how to do your duty!" and in half a minute he had the knot untied.

They were now afraid of the little boy, and were inclined to think the Devil helped him; and as he untied them so readily, they said they believed he tied them while they were asleep. They were like those who "would not believe in the future life, though one arose from the dead." Though puzzled, they determined to baffle whatever power controlled the boy.

They again watched, but, as before, were baffled; for while they slept the cage was taken to pieces and removed from the house. In amazement they beheld what had been accomplished, and declared that it only could have been done through supernatural power.

The little boy could give no light on the subject, any more than he could in reference to the tying and untying; for he was not conscious of taking a part in the affair. He undoubtedly was in a somnambulistic, or trance-like condition, when he performed such incomprehensible things.

One strange freak of the incomprehensible, invisible, and, as Frank thought, "infernal" power displayed in this work, was putting the timbers of the cage in the well; and though not sunken, they were recovered with no little trouble. Their sleeping so soundly puzzled them quite as much as any part of the programme; and it is a wonder they did not accuse themselves of doing the strange things while asleep and under the influence of a controlling dream. And who knows?

We have no doubt but that many of the most marvellous things done and imputed to supernatural agency, are done by the persons with whom they occur, either while asleep and under the influence of a dream, or when absent-minded, or in a trance-like condition. We have seen persons do things while in an abnormal or trance-like state, resembling the somnambulistic state, that they could not do in their normal condition; hence they have been thought above human power. But we must close this digression, and leave Frank and his wonders, remaining as greatly puzzled as the reader, and again present Elder Webber and more of his adventures.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELDER WEBBER had heard all about Frank's second scourge of frogs, and also of the wonderful proceedings subsequently in connection with the little boy, and thought he saw an opportunity to make money out of the new wonder.

The Elder had changed wonderfully, and professed great friendship and interest in Frank's family since his own trouble.

Probably he thought it "wise policy," inasmuch as many had said his own trouble was for persecuting Frank. Besides, Frank's father had been a clergyman, and to convert the Elder, and save him from his past evil life, he had made great efforts, and had also done what he could to bring him into the ministry; and although the Elder had many times fallen out by the way, and had shaken the good man's hope of saving him at last, yet he held on to him. Hence Frank's father had been quite busy, the last years of his life, in keeping the Elder straight. But the Elder had an effectual way of making people believe, for the time being, that he was sincere. Frank, though knowing his antecedents, was also inclined to believe him in earnest this time. Thus there was a good opening for the Elder.

The Elder spent many hours at Frank's, and always had with him his boy, instructing him to learn all that could possibly be learned, both in reference to the raps and to the trance-like appearance of Frank's boy.

It was fortunate for the Elder, in his new devilish device, that he had a boy, a bright little fellow, and "a chip of the old block." He had manifested, for several years, quite as much interest in his father's horse-trades as the Elder himself had; and in fact, he, like his father, really thought that the use of any means was justifiable in the matter of making money. Such an assistant would prove no small aid to the Elder, in carrying out his newly-conceived plan of turning a portion of public notice from Frank to himself; and though Frank would not turn the mysterious phases of his affairs into a money speculation, as he was rich, yet the Elder, being a poor Methodist minister, people would not think it strange in him doing so, but would uphold him in it and help it along.

The Elder wisely concluded that, as both Frank and himself had been plagued most to death with frogs, the public would expect him to have an experience with his boy similar to that which Frank was having with his.

As before stated, the Elder saw money in the new wonder, just as professors of legerdemain do in their mysterious and incomprehensible tricks, and which they turn to a money-making account. He therefore improved an opportunity to gain information which others used for mere curiosity; and if he should not in reality have such wonderful and unaccountable things occur, he was determined, by having them imitated, to make the people believe they did; for he enjoyed being hypocritical in everything. The Elder, having this view of the subject, believed that though he could not contrive any plan for raising the Devil which could be patented, he had concocted a way of raising money which might prove superior to preaching.

His first plan was to produce the raps. This was no small task, but he succeeded in the following manner: In the cellar he had a stick, about three feet long, hung on a pivot at the distance of about one-third its length, so that the long part would be the heavier. He then fastened a string to the short end of the stick, and passed it through a staple driven in another place about one foot below the stick, and thence along across the cellar to another room, and thence up through the floor. The stick was directly under the floor where the Elder took his seat by a table, upon which he had his Bible.

After taking a seat, and reading a few appropriate verses and singing a short hymn, he would ask questions, when his boy would pull the string to produce the raps of one, two, or three, just as the fact might require an answer of "No," "Don't know," or "Yes."

Elder Webber seemed to find favor with supernatural powers of some kind, and he cared but little what their moral status was, so long as he was led on to fortune and to fame. Sure enough, his boy had been an apt scholar, and could imitate Frank's boy very well in all things. But lo and behold! it soon was evident that the boy was, in reality, possessed of a power altogether beyond the ability of his father to understand.

Now, at the date of our story, or at the time when all these things were taking place, animal magnetism was as little known as spiritualism. Yet, ever since the world was made, or two mortals placed on earth, animal magnetism has been in existence. Thousands of men, women and children have been under its influence, yet knew it not.

Well, Elder Webber possessed this magnetic influence over his boy, and his desire being so great to have him become like Frank's boy, and he so concentrating his mind on the subject and connecting his boy with it, the boy was soon in a similar condition to that of Frank's boy ; that is, he was brought under the power of animal magnetism. In that way the Elder controlled him, though unconscious of the fact himself. Hence the peculiarities of his and Frank's boy he thought to be similar.

By this time all the people thought that the Elder's and Frank's experience in the case of the boys was to be analogous to that of the Elder's and Frank's in the case of the frogs.

The condition of the boy at last became very strange indeed. Whenever in conversation with his father, all his father's thoughts and eccentric notions were the boy's thoughts and notions ; and on that account there were some strange capers performed for so young a boy, making it a very easy thing to believe the boy was bewitched.

One day the Elder felt very much elated at the prospect of finding great wealth through his boy, even hidden treasure, and this thought found a lodgment in the boy's head also, and resulted in his writing out, in full, that a great pot of gold was buried in the grave-yard, and named the locality—though not so definitely as could have been desired, as it was within the space of ten feet one way, thirty the other, and two deep.

The boy's mind was so influenced by his father's mind, that this was one of the results ; and probably why the treasure was located in the grave-yard rather than some other locality, was because the Elder was thinking of the grave-yard and grave-digger when the thought of buried money first came into his mind.

A great task was now before the Elder, for he might have to dig thirty feet by ten, and two deep, before finding his prize. But he was in the prime of life, and able to perform hard work, yet as big a coward for a coward as old Blackheart's bull-frog was for a frog. So digging in a grave-yard at night, all alone, was out of the question. But whom could he employ, or to whom intrust the secret?

He finally resolved to look over the ground by daylight, for that he was not afraid to do; besides, he could invite one of the brethren to take a walk, and, as hundreds entered the cemetery, they could do so, too. He accordingly took this course, but was disappointed in his discoveries, as he found two newly-made graves within the limits of the space supposed to contain his prize; and he queried, "What if the grave-digger has found the gold, and what had I better do about it?" He was certain the gold was buried as stated, and he was very anxious about it. He finally concluded to call on the grave-digger, under the plea of borrowing some money; and as they both had accommodated each other on former occasions, it would not appear strange. In taking this course he could ascertain whether or not he had much money on hand. But he was met by the poor, hard-working man, who was on his way to the Elder's on a similar errand. His anxiety being now relieved about the pot of gold, he very willingly accommodated him with all he had, for he was sure of having more, and an abundance.

He now determined to go to work with the aid of his boy, which he accordingly did, after consulting him as to the spot. And the Elder was gratified to find that it was in an easy place to dig, and just where his own judgment said the gold might be. Hence he had all the hope, as well as avarice, he needed to stimulate him in his search.

Now it so happened that a couple of medical students had concluded to "snatch" the body of the last subject, which was that of a young woman who had died of consumption; and it so happened

that they had selected the same night the Elder was to dig for his money. They were not so anxious, however, as the Elder was to begin their task early, for theirs would not be half so great; hence he had been at work several hours when the robbers came to do their dismal work. They were dressed in disguise, and also had with them a sheet, in which to play the ghost if they were disturbed. So, while the Elder was digging with all his might, his boy kept watch.

When the young rascals came to procure the body, they were very much surprised to find some one ahead of them, and after their own prize, as they supposed. So they concluded to wait till they thought their predecessors had accomplished their object, and then by strategy secure the body without doing the work.

Now the Elder had taken along a bottle of his good Holland gin, to keep his courage and hope up; and he had lain off his coat, containing his pocket Bible and hymn-book; but his bottle of gin he had by his side, so as to take a little often. And thus he worked on, hour after hour, till he came to the last grave. He had gone about two feet below the surface, as he had been advised by the power directing his boy; and this, too, singularly enough, accorded with his own judgment.

The young students became very tired of waiting so long, as well as curious, and therefore concluded to play the ghost and see how their strategem would work. So, well clothed around with the sheet, looking so like an unearthly being, one of them took a position within a few feet of the Elder, when his boy, seeing the white object, in fear cried out, "A ghost! a ghost!" while at the same moment the Elder saw the apparition too, or, as he feared the Devil himself, and with a spring worthy of Frank Friendless, or old Blackheart's bull-frog, he started upon the jump. He could not stop to run, with his lame hip, so he went it by the hop, on one leg, nearly a rod at a time, the boy yelling like one crazed, close in the rear. The Elder kept on till he fell half dead at his own door and at the feet of his wife, who had been on the lookout

that none should see her husband bring home his gold, and also to be ready to take it in charge when he arrived.

The two young men—now puzzled more than ever—went to work and had their prize, and made a swift and safe retreat.

The next morning the Elder's wife started quite early to recover the coat and bottle of gin, as it would not be to the Elder's advantage if these things were found in the grave-yard. But the grave-digger, with another man, had gone there earlier still, as there were several graves to be dug that day, and it would require an early commencement to have all completed in season.

Therefore, when the Elder's wife came up she saw the men, and as she knew they would identify the Elder's coat and bottle of gin, she boldly presented herself for them; but when the grave-digger pointed to the empty grave and coffin—for the students had also retreated in haste, as it was growing light, and having no time to fix things up—Mrs. Webber was amazed, and began to think her husband guilty of digging up the girl instead of gold—as she knew he would do if he thought he could make money thereby. So she knew not what to say, but in fright fled to upbraid her husband for committing such depredations on the dead, and deceiving her. She knew the boy was under his father's control, and now she believed the Devil's also, since their digging for gold had proved a failure, besides involving them in serious trouble.

When she returned, and related to her husband all that had transpired, he, poor fool, thought that the young woman had appeared to him herself; and he was now more frightened than ever, thinking that he, too, was soon to die. But he soon recovered from this condition of mind. - Now, in a country place such as this, the desecration of a grave-yard spread like a report of murder; and soon the neighbors from all directions flocked to the Elder's to upbraid him for his monstrous wickedness and glaring hypocrisy—the unbelievers declaring that it was worse than swapping horses.

The Elder was soon taken into custody and brought before the leading justice, where he made a clean breast of the whole affair.

Now, the great space dug over before coming to the grave seemed to corroborate the statement of the Elder, and a search-warrant being issued and the body found—though the robbers could not be—the corpse was reinterred, and the Elder discharged from custody.

Had the young rascals secured the body in a quiet way, replaced the coffin, and restored the grave to its former appearance, the Elder would have been saved his exposure, and the greatest hubbub the place ever experienced would have been entirely avoided.

The labor, fright, and jumping on one leg as though Satan was indeed after him, and the yelling boy—for he was still under the control of his father's mind, and, like his father, thought the Devil was after them sure—combined to completely upset the Elder, and make him severely ill. On this account the people were inclined to pity him. They concluded that his mind had been shaken on account of giving away his inheritance, when he might have retained it, and thus have saved himself the necessity of digging for gold and its consequent embarrassing exposure.

They therefore made him a donation. And it was not a little amusing to see how the donation visit was managed. Some of the brethren brought what they could spare, or what they could part with at the least sacrifice; others brought what was of no use to themselves; while others brought what had to be consumed at once to save it—thus disposing of that which was of little or no use to themselves as an offering to the Lord. A few brought money. But by the time they had all satisfied themselves with the good things of the table which they had brought, their remuneration was about equal to their donation.

Though the proceeds of the party did the Elder but little pecuniary good, yet it served to make him feel that he was again

established in the good opinion and loving esteem of the church.

Frank Friendless was among the donors. He was much inclined to pity the Elder to a large extent, but upon reflection he only gave him what would be expected from a rich and good man. The troubles of Frank had caused him to feel a pity for the Elder he never could have felt without such experience.

The Elder soon recovered and went to preaching very zealously—for he had as much “brass” or “cheek” as the boldest “confidence man” on earth—and soon his gold-digging scrape was forgotten; for he had earnestly declared that, if he had gold by the bushel, he would only do good with it, and that was why he cared for gold. And the course he took once, when he gave away all his inheritance, gave his statement the appearance of truth. But he was as much subject to the temptation of his evil nature as ever, and was as shrewd as horse-jockeys always are—though he was now only an ex-horse jockey; yet he was one in principle just the same, and his other profession was only a cloak to enable him to get the best of the bargain in all trades.

He pondered over the loss of his twenty-five thousand dollars and reasoned as follows: If the frogs came to curse him for obtaining such money through some old pirate, in such a dishonest manner as he had employed, that perhaps Frank Friendless had also come into possession of some of the same money, somehow, before it had been advertised; for their experience had been the same, and it looked quite reasonable that they had both been punished for the same offence.

Well, he continued to wonder and reason how Frank obtained his money. He thought he saw light. Frank had become as suddenly rich as he had by getting his twenty-five thousand dollars. That, after getting all fixed up as he had, then came the frogs just as they had to him. And he concluded that he must have obtained it in a manner similar to that of his own. Of this he felt certain, “and that was why he knew what I must do to appease the frogs; and as I was thus cursed, he also knew

the nature of my wealth." But how frogs came to take an interest in the affairs of those who came into possession of such money, was a mystery that puzzled the Elder more than the most obscure text in the Bible.

The Elder thought, of course, that if Frank had obtained such money, he had procured it as he had, dishonestly; for he believed that all who became rich, or made a good trade, were dishonest. But he was very careful, for a season, that Frank should not suspect his thoughts, as he might be on his guard, and he, consequently, not be able to detect what he would like to—the source of Frank's wealth beyond a doubt. He thought that, if he could ascertain the source and manner of his obtaining his great wealth—his surmises proving correct—he would be enabled to make him divide with him, rather than he should expose him. Therefore, if the case was as it now looked to him, he should soon be all right again; and he concluded to hurry up the "old jade," as he called one's fortune, by writing the following letter to test his suspicions:

"MR. FRANK FRIENDLESS, SIR:—Having learned the source of your fabulous wealth, I have come to understand the cause of your scourge of frogs, and of your other peculiar trouble; and as you may be anxious to appease an offended God and thereby turn away His wrath, I now write to you, that you may kill two birds with one stone—that is, appease Divine displeasure, and silence my tongue.

"Should you not feel inclined to follow my suggestion and part with a portion of the pirate's money, perhaps public opinion will make you wish you had, when it will be too late to disprove the facts which I know to be true.

"Should you see proper to bestow twenty-five thousand dollars on me, you can do so on to-morrow night, at ten o'clock. I shall ride past your house, and you will know me by my dress. I shall be attired in black, with goggles on, and light veil. You are not

to speak, only to hand me the package, which I shall take without reply. I am a lady acquaintance, but you will never know my name, as I now use a fictitious one. EUDORIA SMITH."

The Elder knew that, if his experiment proved a failure, he would be no worse off afterward than before; but his present view of the case led him to anticipate a favorable result, which prompted him on to happy success.

His reasoning had, in part, been correct. He once possessed a portion of some old pirate's gold, and by being driven to part with it had been more fully driven to the Devil, if possible; though he pretended he had given it away all for the Lord's sake, or His cause.

He thought he could so disguise himself that he would escape detection. He felt very sure of the money, as he argued in his own mind that such an accusation, though false, would lead Frank to accept the proposition offered to prevent its becoming public; otherwise he would not have ventured the experiment; while he was so confident of success that he did not fear, or even stop to consider, that the disguise, if detected, would not be a very enviable predicament for him, a Methodist minister, to be found in.

When Frank read the letter, he exclaimed, "Poor Elder! he knows not what he is doing!" He at once saw through the plot. And had it not been for the fact that he knew the Elder would have to disgorge again, he might have taken a different course from the one pursued, and one he would have been justified in taking toward any one who undertook to levy "blackmail." But as he would be getting rid of some of that money which had caused him such a suffering life—even from the first day of its discovery—he was quite willing to comply with the demand of the Elder, who would, he believed, soon find himself engaged in something beside preaching the gospel to sinners and swapping horses.

According to the Elder's programme, at the hour mentioned a strange team, with the Elder as a lady dressed in black, came

slowly on its way, and, as it was about passing, Frank appeared and handed a package to the lady occupant, who took it, and bowing thanks, continued on. The Elder had purposely driven in a round-about way, so as to be in the direction of his home. Frank was inclined to enclose a note for him, but upon reflection concluded to let him rejoice in his success, as he knew it would be of short duration.

The Elder now felt that he was comparatively rich again, and, as once before, he changed somewhat his surroundings, but not much, for fear the people would say that he had found a pot of gold, or had again been successful in his favorite business of horse-trading.

So in his happiness he went on for a season, when, all at once, the rapping he heard took all the grandeur out of those raps he and his boy had produced. Now this astonished the Elder, and he was inclined to think the Devil was becoming liberal toward him, after all. He concluded that perhaps it was because he wasn't so infernal poor, therefore not so much beneath his notice. But had he known of the existence of old Blackheart's manuscript and its contents, his eyes would have been opened with as much of a horrified stare as they were in church when the old pirate bellowed through the old frog at his feet.

Whatever the wonderful power was so puzzling to Frank, it is quite immaterial to us, as we have only to state the facts, without any selfish motive, and are as willing that it should have been old Blackheart as the Devil himself, or any one else. But Captain Blackheart, having progressed to a condition beyond that of the frog, and having now the capacity to take possession of the Elder's boy and control him as the means of accomplishing his will, because of his superior refinement may have found it more in keeping with his condition to turn over the Elder and his family into the hands of those more in harmony with their natures; and if such instruments were in reality evil spirits, they would be doing only what he had accomplished in part for himself—working out their own salvation while raising the Devil with the Elder.

The Elder now felt that he was of more account than ever; he had twenty-five thousand dollars, and none were aware of it besides his wife. Frank Friendless even, or any of the brethren, did not know of it; when, before, it was known that he had his money, as he had to apply openly to obtain it. Therefore he would have to invest his treasure in a private manner, which, beside preventing unpleasant remarks—though never so much deserved—it would not be the means of causing the brethren to withhold their support.

Notwithstanding the Elder believed it was because he obtained the pirate's money unjustly he was compelled to give it up, and though he pretended to believe Frank's money was of the same nature, yet he was willing to run the risk of again offending God, or whatever power had sent the frogs to him to torment him for his crime.

The Elder was now so elated, that he showed his good feelings in his sermons and in general conversation; while his boy began to act queerly, and by his odd pranks to interest the household.

Sometimes, after his father had prayed in his family, the boy would pray for hypocrites, and again for horse-jockeys, and then for the wicked of every kind.

Once, when the Elder felt like praying for all creation, and was some time about it, his boy, who had procured a needle and some stout linen thread, actually sewed the edge of his father's coat skirt firmly into the seam of the carpet, so that when the Elder moved to arise from his knees he found, as he thought, that the Devil had him by his coat tail; and in his surprise he as suddenly slipped from his coat as ever any rascal did from the hands of an officer. With amazement he beheld the situation, while his wife, in her effort to lift it up, found it tightly sewed into a seam of the carpet which she herself had sewed months before.

She rubbed her eyes and took a second look, then ran from the room, followed by all the others, declaring the Devil had done

the work; while the boy was most frightened of all, which saved him from the least suspicion. And in fact he was as far from knowing that he had a hand in as were the others. At this juncture some friends called, to whom they related the affair, and who at once exercised their good sense by releasing the coat with the use of the scissors. They admitted it was a curious transaction, but said it could not have been done without hands, and believed the Devil had employed them. Therefore they advised the Elder that on the next occasion to watch as well as pray. The Elder's family had become very nervous, and began to believe the Devil was after them in reality.

The affair went abroad in spite of every effort to prevent it, and it was reported that "the Devil would not let the Elder arise from his knees till he had confessed all his sins."

Before starting for church on Sabbath morning in their new family carriage—they rode in style after his success with Frank—his boy, who was still full of the Devil, had procured a comic picture of two horse-jockeys swapping horses; and the illustration was so perfect that none could mistake its meaning, while the motto underneath, in large letters, was: "I'll give you my horse for your mare, and a gallon of the best Holland gin to boot." Well, the boy had sat just behind his father in the carriage—but just how he did the trick we cannot tell, doubtless the Devil helped him, as, according to report he can do almost anything, and all kinds of devilish works are laid to his charge—and thus contrived to fasten the picture under his father's cloak on to the back skirt of his frock coat; so that, when the Elder threw off his cloak in a very pompous manner, there, in plain view, was the objectionable picture. The "sinners" gave a laugh that was both loud and long, while the Elder, for a moment, thought the congregation was going crazy. He was soon informed of the cause of all the mirth, but of course did not suspect his own innocent boy. He now felt that his popularity was at stake, and hence took his text with the intention of showing that, because of his goodness,

some one, instigated by the Devil, was seeking to destroy his influence. His text was: "A tree is known by its fruit."

In illustrating his subject he described various fruit-bearing trees, showing that some were of the same species, yet the fruit was as different as the different races of men, though all were from the same source. And when it was discovered that a certain apple-tree, for instance, bore good fruit, the fact was well known by the numerous clubs and stones beneath its branches, where they had been used to knock off the apples. So it was with the good and faithful Christian—quoting: "All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" not may, but *shall*—no way to escape it. For his part, he was willing, and, by the grace of God, *able* to endure hardships, like a *good* soldier of the *cross*. "And when the clubs and stones are seen lying around," said he, "please remember it is because the tree bears good fruit."

But quicker than thought his boy exclaimed in a shrill, loud voice: "What if a sour apple-tree has a big old hornets' nest in it, and the boys throw stones and clubs at it; is that a sign of good apples too?"

Well, the Elder laughed, and so did all the congregation; they couldn't help it. He saw that the boy's question had spoiled his sermon completely, he having been unfortunate in his illustration; and he really wished for a glass of his Holland gin.

After the meeting closed, the "ungodly" put it to vote, to determine whether the Elder was a good apple-tree, bearing good fruit, or a sour one, with a hornets' nest in its branches; and they closed their discussion by naming him "Elder Hornet."

Once, when the Elder was praying in church for mercy for the chief of sinners, the boy cried out: "That means Elder Webber," which so astonished his father, and all present, that it looked as though he might as well dismiss the congregation and go home; but he was not very easily disconcerted, and therefore took his text, which was:

"The Devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

He in the first place gave the origin of the Devil; then he compared him to a roaring lion. Here he portrayed the king of beasts in all his wild ferocity; then he showed that Satan was just like him, only more so, that is more evil; for said the Elder, the lion kills and destroys to eat, having a perfect right to appease his hunger; but the Devil kills and destroys out of pure maliciousness, pure devilishness, when it does him no good, not even in appeasing hunger. Then he described the roar of the lion and the roar of the Devil. He said the Devil's roar, though in a whisper, so far exceeded the roar of the lion, that while the lion's roar only paralyzed the nerves of the body, the roar of the Devil paralyzed both soul and body, because it was whispered to the soul direct.

He had often heard the Devil roar, though but in a whisper, saying: "Elder Webber, don't you want all of the kingdoms of the earth? Only fall down and worship me, and all shall be thine;" and as he uttered this in a whisper, to illustrate his subject, his boy cried out: "Did you accept the offer?" And the contrast between the Elder's whisper and the shrill yell of the boy was so great, that the Elder sat down, while all the congregation leaped to their feet in affright; for none at first knew who the interrogator was. It sounded no more like the voice of the boy than it did like the report of a musket, and it was so unexpected, and so in contrast with the whispered illustration of the Elder, that its effect reminded the congregation of the description of the blast of Gabriel's trump at the "day of judgment."

The Elder soon asked: "Will some brother pray?" and, wonder of wonders! his own boy prayed, equal to a "presiding elder;" so that all were as much amazed to hear such a prayer as they had been upon hearing him ask the question. The boy seemed to know no more about the affair than if he had not been present.

That night the Elder left the boy at home. In fact the youngster declared that if he cut up so he did not wish to go. So all the rest of the family went, leaving him at home.

It so happened that the Elder had just procured a new horse, and given him in charge of the boy; and hardly had they reached the church before the boy, taking some oats to entice him along, led him into the house and up a flight of stairs to an unfinished chamber. He then gave him a box of oats and left him to enjoy his new quarters.

When the Elder returned his boy was on hand, and very soon had his father's horse put up for the night, and all things squared away.

Now, the Elder being very much fatigued after the labor and excitement of the day, they all soon retired, and all were soon asleep except the Elder.

And it so happened that his new horse, after eating his oats, lay down to rest, like a horse at home; but the bare floor was not like that of a well-bedded stall, and he was rather restless. Just as the Elder was passing into a soothing sleep and a beautiful dream, the horse raised himself up. The racket he made was almost enough to frightened a *good* man to death; the effect upon the Elder then can be imagined. The chamber being unfinished, and the floor-boards loose, the horse, when he began walking about, made a racket equal to what "Old Scratcher" himself might be supposed to make, had he been shut up instead of the horse. The Elder's sermon about the Devil had made him think that he had come for him sure enough, and in fright and haste he jumped up, as did all his family, and they started for the door, thinking they must escape from the house; when, to make things worse, if possible, the horse, by accident or design, came down stairs in a great hurry; but they succeeded in opening the door, and had just got well out when the old horse followed his owner; and with a snort and his tail pointing to Heaven—as the Elder thought—he started upon a "dead run" for his old home, some miles distant—the Elder not even mistrusting that it was his own horse, or any other, but believed him to be the Devil incarnate.

The fright fairly broke the poor Elder down, and his teeth

chattered, and his whole body shook as with an ague-fit, while he declared that in reality he never believed there was a Devil before, and there was a prospect of his praying once more in earnest.

Now this affair was spread abroad, for the Elder missed his horse, and the original owner found him in the morning; besides, the Elder's family had ventured up stairs, and seen for themselves that a horse had been there in reality, or else the Devil was like a horse indeed.

By this time the pranks of the Elder's boy were fully known, and it was said that he was excelling Frank's boy by a great deal; but as the elder had been anxious to experience all this notoriety, that he might turn it to a moneyed account, he was not going to give it up just because some of the incomprehensible things of late had brought ridicule upon him. The people suggested that he and Frank join partnership and exhibit the wonderful works of the Devil through their boys; but while Frank would do nothing of the kind, the Elder would have been unwilling, as he believed that he and his boy could astonish the whole world and satisfy the curiosity of all interested, and so save to his own pocket all the income.

But somehow the boy and his father did not seem to work together—everything went wrong; but still the Elder persevered. He now had public seances, with an admission fee, and had them in his church. One evening with a full house the Elder began to sing:

“From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand;”

and here his boy broke in with unexpected vigor:

“Where Afric's sons and daughters
Creep round among the sands.”

The Elder and all laughed, as though the boy had made an improvement.

After the mirth had subsided, the boy again sang the following impromptu song:

“ My father was a nobleman,
And a very fine man was he,
But I was a naughty boy,
And so ran off to sea.

“ I’ve sailed to every foreign clime,
I’ve roamed the whole world o’er,
And under the ‘cross bones and black flag’
I reaped a golden store.

“ And many a ship I’ve helped sink—
For dead men tell no tales—
And now I stand on the infernal brink,
Where I hear gnashing of teeth and wails.

“ And that man there, who talks so fair,
Who preaches to you his belief,
Is worse than I, so says the Most High,
For the receiver is worse than the thief.

“ Gold he has laid up in store,
Obtained by knavish wit,
And still he hungers and thirsts for more,
As though he hadn’t a ‘bit.’

“ And now I’ll go to that evil man,
And let this boy take rest,
And you all shall see, as plain as you can,
That of the Elder and Pirate I’m best.”

At the close of the song, the peculiar state the boy had been in passed entirely away, and he took his seat with as little consciousness of what had been going on as though he had not been present, while the singular influence seized the Elder, just as had been predicted in the song. He twitched in every limb, squinted his eyes, and made the most horrible facial contortions that were ever seen, and finally arose to his feet and began to swear like an old trooper, and made use of all the most horrible language that an old pirate would use while engaged in battle. This soon passed off, and then another singular influence seemed to come upon him, making him act worse than before, and imitate an Indian. And thus he went on, acting many degrees worse than any single devil could possibly have made him, till he began to personate an old horse-jockey and horse thief, which brought down the house.

He next personated a Methodist local preacher, and said that he was neither one thing nor another. It put him in mind of a tad-pole, that is, a young frog just as it was passing from the polly-wog state to a frog, with its legs growing out and shedding its tail, so that it was neither tad-pole nor frog ; and as a minister, the local preacher was only called into use in case of necessity ; and then added : “ As for poor Elder Webber, he might have been a millionaire, if he hadn’t been a poor, honest Methodist preacher.”

Then, all at once, the influence changed, and he went to dancing like an old dancing-master ; and, with his lame hip, he made the greatest laugh during the seance. While yet dancing, he came to his normal condition, and for once in his life he appeared really ashamed of his position. This was the first time the spirits controlled the Elder.

A reporter present gave a minute detail of all ; and a sicker man than the Elder was, for a season, there never lived. Frank Friendless thought it served him just right.

The Elder now often passed into a peculiar state, just as Frank’s boy had, and his own too ; and often, when in this condition, he did many funny things ; so that people said he was crazy, or possessed of the Devil.

He took a great notion to buy horses ; and people came to believe that he had found a pot of gold, at any rate, he had so much money. He bought, in all, thirty horses, and there was not one good one in the lot, while at the same time he paid just as much as though they were first-class. Some were poor as crows, others were spavined, some had the heaves, and a number were blind and lame. They were a burden to themselves to live, as well as to the Elder to keep.

After the Elder came to his senses, or into his normal condition, and saw what he had done with so much of his money, he said that he must have been on a long drunk, and cursed and swore like the old apostle Peter, or like an old pirate ; and finally he

did get as drunk as any old toper, and kept so for weeks, accompanying his debauch with the worst abuse possible of his family and friends. His horses were a dead loss to him, and he gave them to a company of tanners, who killed them for their hides.

Soon after this he made the acquaintance of a gang of horse-thieves and counterfeiters, and concluded to join them. As he had money to use in branching out in the business, he did so, and became as prominent in the new enterprise as he had been as a horse-jockey and Methodist preacher. But misfortune followed, and soon every dollar of his twenty-five thousand was gone, and, worse off than a beggar, and as wicked as old Lucifer, we will bid him adieu.

If the Devil was not in the Elder, or the spirit of some old horse-thief or jockey, while others were around him, then his evil nature must have become fully developed, for he as speedily went to destruction as the swine did, when, after the devils entered them, they ran into the sea and were drowned.

CHAPTER IX.

AT the peculiar affairs and conduct of the Elder, Frank and his wife were not surprised, while his fate led them to see and feel the importance of doing something to quiet their own fears and clear their own consciences; but which way to turn, except to the path of duty, they did not know. Finally they concluded to visit their pastor, as they knew him to be both wise and good.

Frank's wonderful adventures with his boy continued, but that very evil appearance or influence which previously showed itself, had passed away, and was replaced by a mild and winning way, seeming to indicate the influence of a mother's or a father's presence in changing the nature of the boy. Let that be as it may, the change in Frank and his wife corresponded with the altered influence about the boy.

They finally went on a visit to the minister's, and took along their boy, thinking that, if he should enter into his very peculiar state, their pastor would know how to pity them, as well as understand how to give counsel. They had no sooner become seated around the table to dine, than the raps were heard underneath, although they ceased, in a few moments, till after dinner.

All the particulars of the new phenomenon were related to the minister's family, and discussed and finally disposed of to the satisfaction of the clergyman, but not to the satisfaction of Frank. He was still unprepared for that part of the programme which interested the clergyman's family to a great degree.

They held a consultation, and it was arranged that the boy should remain over night at the minister's, and that he and his wife should keep an eye constantly upon him.

During the evening the boy called for a slate, and then wrote :

"REV. SIR.—Your duty lies with Mr. Friendless, and not with his boy. He now has one million of gold in his possession, which he holds in trust to be divided among the poor, or to be used in the cause of humanity.

"During my frog campaign he did his duty quite well, but now he even scorns my name, and defies my power. I shall continue to follow him through life, unless he does his duty. But the worst feature in his case is, that he knows his duty, and does it not.

CAPTAIN BLACKHEART, *Pirate.*"

The minister presently asked the boy why he had written what was on the slate, and he answered, very frankly, that he did not write it. "But," said the minister, "I saw you write it;" and immediately the boy wrote again:

"He does not know anything about the affair. I, who once roamed the high seas and scourged men, and who lately took possession of a big frog, led Frank Friendless to his grandfather's million, and to the million of his wife's grandfather, and to four millions more, which latter four millions he was to use in the cause

of humanity. He has stopped short of doing his whole duty. He is now exposed in his sins, the source of his gold brought to light, and unless he takes heed to himself, he will be led to take a course he will regret for all the future. CAPT. BLACKHEART."

The clergyman was confounded. He was inclined to think the Devil was in the boy. He was convinced that the boy knew nothing of what he had written; in fact, he was not capable of writing it.

All were alarmed, and the minister prayed for deliverance from the evil spirits that hovered around. But what was their surprise to have the little boy follow in an eloquent prayer that was never surpassed by the most eminent divine, and still more surprised to hear him pray for his son Frank and his little grandson. At the close, the little lad seemed to be unconscious of all that had been done.

The minister's family passed a restless night, and, quite early in the morning, they visited Mr. Frank Friendless, taking home the boy. The clergyman fully related all that had happened. In a moment the boy was on his knees, and such a prayer as he offered up to Heaven those present never listened to before.

He prayed for his son Frank and his family, and besought the Lord to be gracious, to help his son do his duty and thereby save his own soul, that he might be happy here on earth, and that the future life might be to him all progression, joy, love, and peace.

He then thanked his Heavenly Father for what his son had been enabled to do, though he had been scourged. He also thanked Him that it was not too late for a full and complete victory over temptation, and besought the extension of mercy for his boy. He then closed by pronouncing the apostolic benediction.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Gost, be with you all. Amen."

In amazement Frank exclaimed: "It seems to me like my

father praying ;” when the boy approached, and, extending his hand, said :

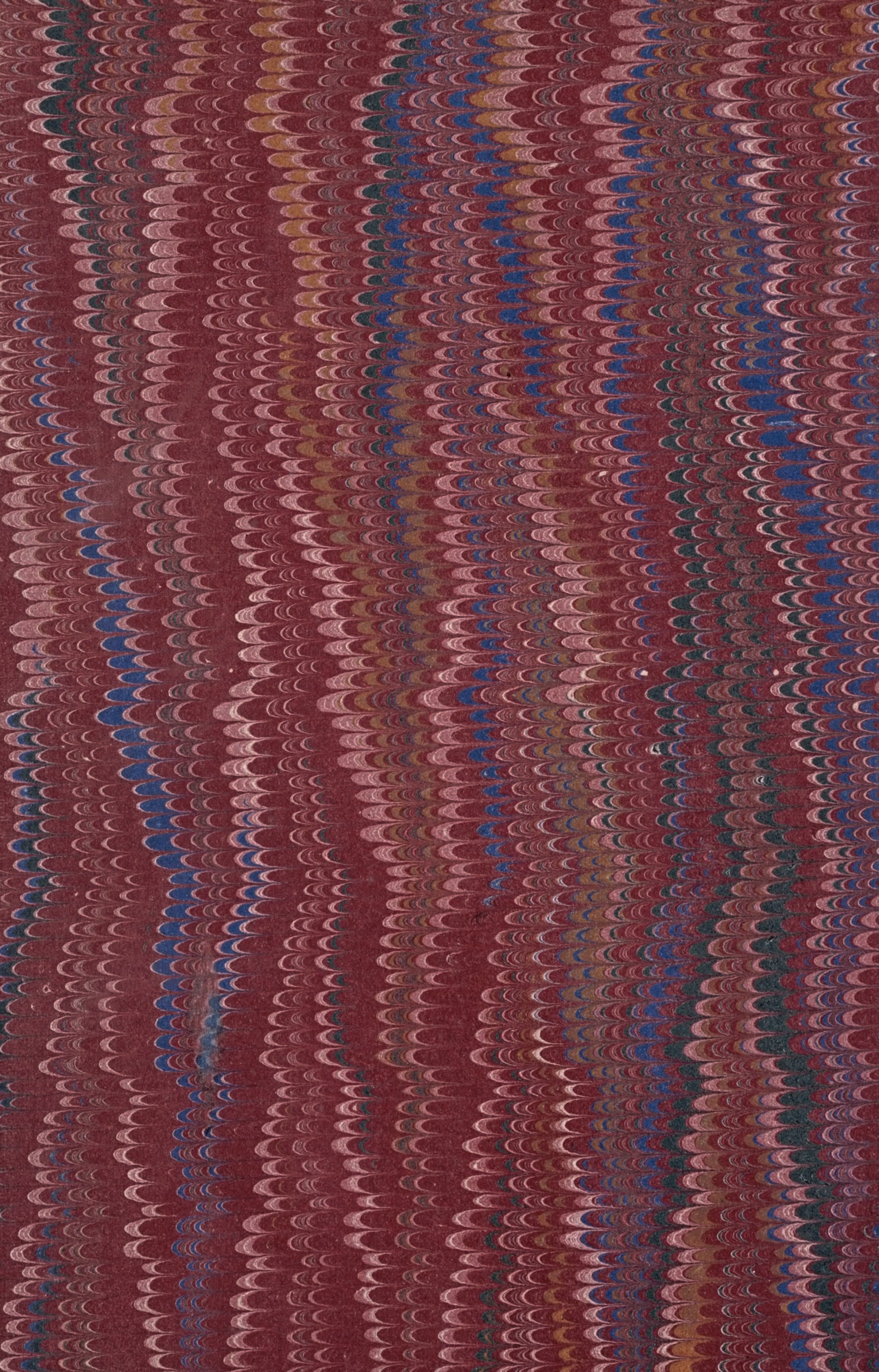
“ Yes, I am your father visiting you through your boy. And I led you, on your first day’s journey, toward your fortune. I also influenced your mind, and led you forth to seek that hidden treasure rightfully belonging to you ; but its discovery to you belonged to another, whose right I could not gainsay. I am still near you, to cheer you in the path of duty ; and while your faithfulness brings up the low and wretched, it also gives me great joy to see that, in doing your duty, you are preparing a bright future where gold is of no account. Farewell.”

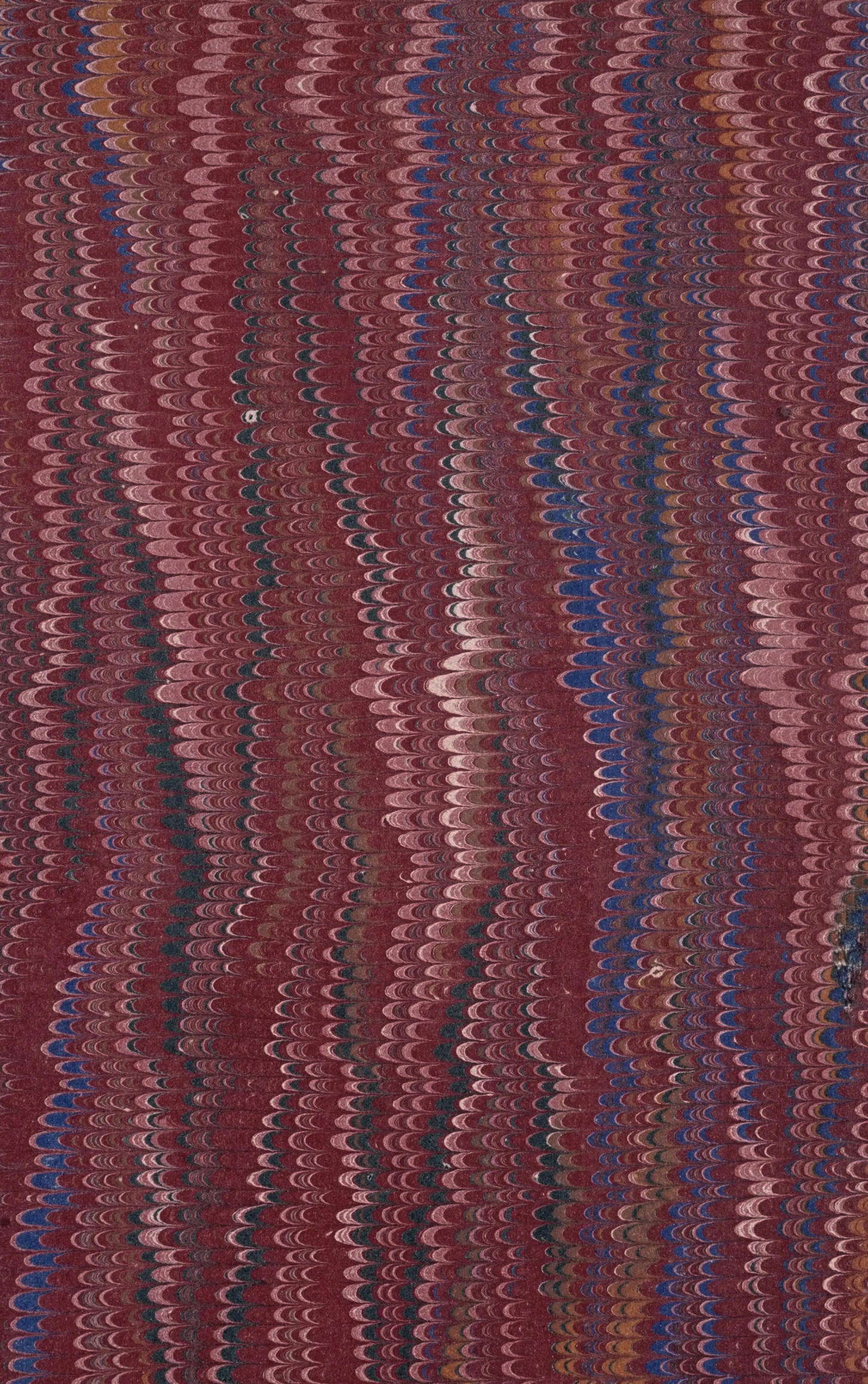
It really seemed to Frank that his own father, by supernatural power, was speaking to him from the other world through his own little boy. And the wonderful occurrence made as lasting an impression on him as though he had seen his long-departed father, face to face.

Frank Friendless now followed the dictates of his fully aroused conscience, and soon found himself a happy man.

In conclusion we will say, we have no explanations to make of this last development, any more than of any other of the singular and interesting things in the adventures of the persons of our story. To the author these wonderful things are not understood. The facts alone he has given, without fear or favor.

FINIS.





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